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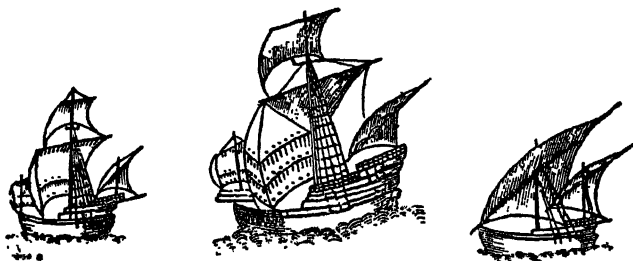








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*NARRATIVES  
OF THE  
DISCOVERY OF AMERICA*

*Edited By*  
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*and*  
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## PREFACE

THE purpose of this book is to present, in a form available to the general reader, the more important documents descriptive of first steps in the discovery of America. When possible, but that is only in the case of Columbus, the discoverer's own story of his voyages has been given; elsewhere the oldest and fullest documents have been utilized.

The Norse voyages of discovery of which records have been preserved were made between the years A.D. 986 and A.D. 1030. None of the Norse explorers, however, left any writings, and the earliest sources of information extant, all Icelandic, though admitted to be compilations of earlier written narratives which may go back as far as the twelfth century, date in their present form from the fourteenth. These facts would challenge our faith in the truthfulness of the assertion that the Norsemen reached America were not the general accuracy of oral tradition in Iceland universally recognized. It is clear that the Saga narratives are ultimately based on the oral reports of the explorers themselves. One of our chief sources, a compilation of Icelandic manuscripts dating from about 1375, known as the Flatey Book, concludes its account of the various voyages to North America with the following words about the

leader of an Icelandic expedition: "Karlsefni, of all men, has given the most circumstantial accounts of all these voyages about which something has now been told." We possess, moreover, corroboration of the finding of Wineland (as the Norsemen called the New World) independent of Saga sources. Casual reference to Wineland in a History of Icelanders by Ári the Learned (1067-1148) shows that the existence of this country was taken for granted by one of the most careful and critical students of Icelandic history. It should be remarked that Ári's grandfather was second cousin to the Icelandic explorer Thorfinn Karlsefni, and that his uncle, from whom he derived his information about Wineland, had it in turn from a man who had himself gone to Greenland with Eric the Red, father of the first Norseman to land in America. An earlier and non-Icelandic confirmation of the discovery is afforded by a reference to Wineland in the *Descriptio insularum Aquilonis* of Adam of Bremen, written before 1076. Thus, in spite of the late date of our sources, there is every reason to believe that the Norse discovery of America is fact, not fiction.

The Sagas offer two independent versions of the discovery of Wineland embodied in three texts. A purely Icelandic version is represented by a manuscript from Hauk's Book, a compilation of Icelandic manuscripts dating from about 1310, and the fifteenth century Saga of Eric the Red; these two texts though differing verbally yet agree in substance. The other version, based apparently on Greenlandic tradition, is found in the fourteenth century Flatey Book. As it seems to be the more reliable of the

two, the present translation follows the version of the Flatey Book, though drawing on the text of Eric's Saga for accounts of events which directly concern Eric himself. The material translated here is obtained from two texts: the Saga of Eric the Red (edited by Severin Eskeland, Oslo 1924) and the Flatey Book (Christiania 1860).

In order to present a full, consecutive and harmonious narrative the Icelandic material is here presented in the form adopted by the author of *The Norse Discoverers of America*, permission to follow such an arrangement being kindly given by Mr. Gathorne-Hardy, F.R.G.S., and the Delegates of the Clarendon Press, Oxford. The adoption of this arrangement involves the suppression of accounts of events in the Saga of Eric the Red which conflict with accounts of those same events in the Flatey Book. This happens in the case of Leif Ericson's discovery of Wineland and the death of Thorvald Ericson. According to the Saga, Leif did not organize an expedition to Wineland but discovered that country by accident on his voyage home from Norway while Thorvald, who led no independent expedition but merely accompanied Thorfinn Karlsefni, was killed, not by Red Indians<sup>1</sup> but by a uniped!<sup>2</sup>

The actual sequence of events in the Saga of Eric the Red is also interfered with in one instance. Chapter II of Eric's Saga forms the introductory chapter of the present translation, next follows the story of Bjarni Herjólfsson,<sup>3</sup> found in the Flatey Book, and then comes

<sup>1</sup> See the following Introduction and § 8 of translation.

<sup>2</sup> A fabulous one-legged man. See *Travels of Sir John Mandeville*.

<sup>3</sup> See the following Introduction and § 3 of translation.



Chapter I of Eric's Saga leading on to Chapter III of the same source.

The translation aims at reproducing the Icelandic narrative in as far as possible the naked, natural style of the original. Since a literal rendering of the verse incorporated would be unintelligible, it is here attempted to communicate the spirit rather than the letter of such verse.

It was the practice of Columbus to keep a log-book or journal, entering every evening the events of the past day, from sunset to sunset. These manuscripts have perished, but they were used by Bartholemé de Las Casas as material for his *History of the Indies*, and in the case of the first transatlantic voyage he wrote a detailed abstract of the document, quoting long passages in the actual words of the explorer while slightly abridging the less interesting portions. This work was first printed in Navarrete's *Coleccion de Viages* of 1825; two years later Samuel Kettell brought out a translation at Boston, and another English version subsequently appeared. Owing to the obsolete terms and careless constructions of Columbus, both translations contained a large number of mistakes. Kettell's edition, which has a bibliographical value as an early piece of American scholarship, is the sounder of the two; it has therefore been used in the present volume, though it was found necessary to subject it to drastic revision.\*

There exists no first-hand material for the voyage of John Cabot in 1497, the only detailed accounts being the

\* A new translation by L. Cecil Jane appeared while this was in the printer's hands (*The Voyages of Columbus*, Argonaut Press, London 1930).

two Italian documents printed here; in each case Brown's translation has been revised. The letter in which Columbus gives the first account of the South American continent, completing the story of the great discoveries, has been newly translated from the text of Navarrete.

The editors' thanks are due to Miss M. A. Sinclair for Map I. The Norse voyages are edited by J. I. Young, the remainder by A. W. Lawrence.



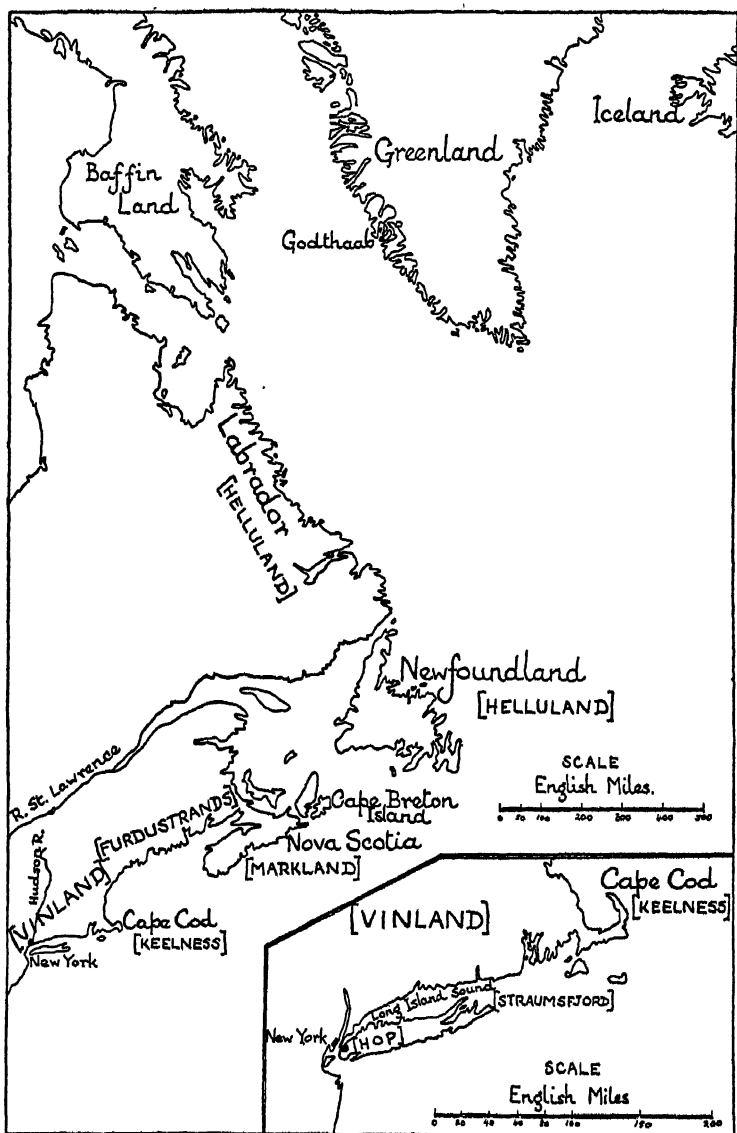
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*\*The asterisk marks those sections relating specifically to the discovery and exploration of America*







THE VOYAGES OF THE NORSEMEN AND CABOT

## INTRODUCTION

ACCORDING to Icelandic tradition the Norsemen came into contact with North America on no less than five separate occasions between A.D. 986 and 1030. The first "discovery," if such it may be called, was made by accident. An Icelfander, Bjarni Herjólfsson, on his way to join his father in Greenland, who had accompanied thither Eric the Red, the Norwegian founder of that colony, was driven by contrary winds on to the coast of North America. Only anxious to make Greenland, Bjarni did not attempt to explore the strange country but sailed until he arrived home, A.D. 986.

Several years later, Eric the Red's son, Leif, bought a ship from Bjarni and set out for the strange lands he had reported. Leif landed in Helluland ("the land of flat stone," Labrador or Newfoundland)<sup>1</sup> and Markland ("woodland," Nova Scotia)<sup>1</sup> and spent the winter in Vinland ("Wineland," the district round about New York)<sup>1</sup> where he found the climate unusually mild. Loading

<sup>1</sup> According to the attempt at identification of the parts of North America visited by the Norsemen, embodied in Mr. Gathorne-Hardy's book, *The Norse Discoverers of America*, though it should be noted that all identifications are conjectural.



his ship with wild grapes and timber, he set sail for Greenland A.D. 1003, rescuing off the Greenland coast some shipwrecked people, amongst them a woman named Guðrið who later married Leif's brother Thorsteinn.

The next man to voyage to Wineland was Leif's brother Thorvald, who was anxious to conduct a thorough-going exploration. After spending two winters in Leif's camp he was killed by the natives (Red Indians) <sup>2</sup> and buried in the new land by his men, who returned to Greenland the following spring, A.D. 1007. Thorsteinn Ericson then attempted a voyage in order to recover Thorvald's body, but never reached America, being driven ashore in the most northerly regions of Greenland inhabited by the Norsemen, where he was struck down by plague A.D. 1008.

By far the most famous of all the Norse voyages to North America is that of the Iclander, Thorfinn Karlsefni. Karlsefni visited Greenland in A.D. 1019, and after marrying there Thorsteinn Ericson's widow, Guðrið, organized an expedition to Wineland the next summer. He spent three years exploring the country, finding wild corn and vines, but, as the natives proved hostile, returned to Greenland in A.D. 1023.

The last voyage to America described in the Sagas is that made by Eric the Red's daughter Freydís and two Norwegian brothers, Helgi and Finnbogi (A.D. 1024).

The Icelandic Annals record two further visits to Wineland. An entry for the year 1121 reads: "Eric Bishop of

<sup>2</sup> See § 8 of translation.

Greenland, went to look for Wineland," and another for 1347: "A ship which had sailed to Markland came (to Iceland) from Greenland with eighteen men on board." After this no more is heard in Old Norse literature of American exploration.

COLONIZATION OF GREENLAND  
BY ERIC THE RED

*From Landnamabók II, 14; the source of  
this passage in the Saga of Eric the Red  
and the Flatey Book.*

**T**HORVALD, son of Asvald, son of Ulf, son of Öxna-Thorir, and his son Eric the Red went to Iceland from Jaederen (in Norway), because they had been accused of manslaughter, and taking land at Hornstrandir lived at Drangar, where Thorvald died. Then Eric married Thjóðhild,<sup>1</sup> daughter of Jörund, son of Atli and Thorbjörg the Ship-breasted, who was at that time married to Thorbjörn of Haukadal. Eric moved to the north, cleared land in Haukadal and lived at Ericstead near Vatzhorn. His thralls caused a landslide to fall on Valthjóf's farm at Valthjófsstað and Valthjóf's kinsman Eyjólf "saurr" <sup>2</sup> killed the thralls at Skeiðsbrekka above Vatzhorn. For this Eric killed Eyjólf "saurr" and also Hrafn the Duellist at Leikskáli. Eyjólf's kinsmen Geirsteinn and Odd of Jörfi prosecuted Eric and he was banished from Haukadal. He then took possession of Brokey and Öxney and lived at Trað in Suðrey for the first winter.

<sup>1</sup> Throughout the present translation the modern "th" is used for the Icelandic þ, and the *thorn* for ð, representing the other "th" sound, as in "father."

<sup>2</sup> Lit. "filth."

At this time he lent his hall-beams<sup>3</sup> to Thorgest. Afterwards Eric went to Öxney and lived at Ericstead. He asked for his hall-beams back again but could not obtain them. Eric fetched the hall-beams from Breiðabólstað but Thorgest came after him; they fought not far from the farm at Drangar. Thorgest's two sons and some others fell there. After that both kept a number of men about them. Styrr, Eyjólf from Svíney, the sons of Thorbrand of Álpafjörð and Thorbjörn Vífilsson stood by Eric, the sons of Thord "gellir,"<sup>4</sup> Thorgeirr of Hitárdal and Áslak of Langadal and his son Illugi stood by Thorgest. Eric and his men were outlawed at the Thorsness Thing. He made ready his ship in Ericsvág but Eyjólf hid him in Dímunarvág while Thorgest and his men were searching the islands for him. Thorbjörn, Eyjólf and Styrr accompanied Eric out beyond the islands; he told them that he intended to look for that country which Gunnbjörn son of Ulf "kráka"<sup>5</sup> had seen, when he was driven westwards past Iceland and discovered Gunnbjörn's Skerry. He said that he would come back to his friends if he found the land. Eric sailed out to sea past Snaefellsjökul and arrived (in Greenland) near Miðjökul at a place called Bláserk. Thence he journeyed along the coast to see if the country were habitable in that direction. He spent the first winter on Ericsey near the centre of the Western Settlement.<sup>6</sup> The following spring he went to Ericsfjörð and chose a site for a house there. That summer he went to the unin-

<sup>3</sup> Hall-beams, *seistokkar*; the planking beams between the dais, *set*, which ran along the side-walls of the Icelandic hall, and the unfloored central hall.

<sup>5</sup> Lit. "crow."

<sup>4</sup> "The yellor" ?

<sup>6</sup> In the neighbourhood of Godthaab.

habited western tracts of the country and gave names to many places there. He spent the second winter at Ericsholm close to Hvarfsgnípa but the third summer he went north right up to Snaefell and into Hrafnsfjord. There he imagined that he had come to the top of the Ericsfjord, so he turned back and stayed on Ericsey at the mouth of the Ericsfjord for the third winter. Afterwards in the summer he went to Iceland and landed in Breiðafjord.

He stayed that winter with Ingólf at Hólmslát. In the spring he and Thorgest fought and Eric was beaten. After that they came to terms. That summer Eric went to colonize the country he had found, and which he called Greenland because he imagined that people would be anxious to go there if the country had a good name.

Learned men relate that twenty-five ships left Breiðafjord and Borgarfjord that summer but only fourteen reached that country. Some were driven back and some perished. That was fifteen years before Christianity became the official religion of Iceland (A.D. 1000). Later Eric took possession of Ericsfjord and lived in Brattahlið where he was succeeded by his son Leif.

The following men who accompanied Eric at this time settled in Greenland; Herjólf took Herjólfsfjord, he lived at Herjólfunes; Ketill, Ketilsfjord; Hrafn, Hrafnsfjord; Sölvi, Sölvadol; Snorri Thorbrandsson, Álptafjord; Thorbjörn, "glora"<sup>7</sup> Siglufjord; Einarr, Einarsfjord; Hafgrím, Hafgrímsfjord and Vatnahverfi; Arnlaugr, Arnlaugsfjord. Some, however, went to the Western Settlement.

<sup>7</sup> The meaning of this word is uncertain.

## BJARNI HERJÓLFSSON'S ADVENTURE

*From the Flatey Book*

HERJÓLF was the son of Barð Herjólfsson and related to Ingólf, who was one of the first to settle in Iceland. Ingólf gave Herjólf and his men land between Vág and Reykjanes. Herjólf (the younger) lived first at Drepstok. His wife's name was Thorgerð and their son was Bjarni, a most promising man. He took to going abroad while quite young and won both wealth and renown. He spent alternate winters abroad and with his father. He soon became the owner of a trading ship and during the last winter that he was in Norway Herjólf decided to sail to Greenland with Eric (the Red) and made ready to leave his farm. On the same ship as Herjólf was a Hebridean, a Christian, who composed the "Song of the Great Waves," containing this verse:

Searcher of the hearts of men  
 Guide me on my journeying;  
 Sinless lord of highest heaven,  
 O'er me hold thy hand protecting.

Herjólf settled at Herjólfssnes and was a most distinguished man. Eric the Red lived at Brattahlið, where he was held in the greatest respect and was obeyed by everyone. Eric's children were Leif, Thorvald, Thorsteinn, and a daughter named Freyðís married to a man whose name

was Thorvarð; they lived at Garð where the cathedral is now. She was a very haughty woman, but Thorvarð had not much personality. Freydís had been married to him chiefly for his money. At that time people in Greenland were heathen.

Bjarni arrived with his ship at Eyrar (in Iceland) in the summer of the same year in the spring of which his father had sailed away. Bjarni was greatly surprised when he heard the news and would not unload his cargo. His crew asked him what he intended to do, and he replied that he meant to keep to his custom of making his home with his father for the winter, saying: "I will take the ship to Greenland if you will come with me." They all declared that they would abide by his decision, whereupon Bjarni said: "Our voyage will appear foolhardy since not one of us has been in the Greenland Sea." Nevertheless they put to sea as soon as they were ready and sailed for three days until they lost sight of land when, the fair wind dropping, it began to blow from the north and fogs came on, and they did not know where they were going, and this went on for many days. After this they saw the sun and were able to get their bearings. They hoisted sail and sailed the whole day before sighting land. They discussed amongst themselves what country it might be, Bjarni saying that he did not think it could be Greenland. They asked him if he wanted to sail to that land or not. "I suggest that we sail close in to the land," said he. They did so and soon saw that the land<sup>1</sup> was level and wooded,

<sup>1</sup> Possibly the Barnstable peninsula, Massachusetts. See Introduction, Note 1.

and that there were small hillocks on it, so they left it on their portside and let the sheet turn towards it. Next, after two days' sail they saw another land and asked Bjarni if he thought that this were Greenland yet. He replied that he did not think it was any more like Greenland than the former, "because there are said to be large glaciers in Greenland." They soon approached that land and saw that it was a flat, wooded country. Then the fair wind dropping, the crew took counsel and suggested that they should go ashore there, but Bjarni refused to do this. They declared that they were in need of food and water. "You are short of neither," said Bjarni, yet this assertion provoked some hostile comment from his crew. He ordered them to hoist sail; they did so and turning the prow from the land they sailed out to sea with a southwesterly wind for three days when they sighted the third land; it was a high, mountainous country with glaciers. They asked Bjarni if he would land there, but he declared that he did not wish to, saying, "This country seems to me to be good for nothing." This time they did not lower their sail but kept along the coast and saw that it was an island. Once more they left the land astern, holding out to sea with the same breeze, but the wind increased and Bjarni gave them orders to reef and not to sail faster than their ship and rigging could stand. They now sailed for four days when they sighted the fourth land and asked Bjarni if he thought that that were Greenland or not. He replied, "This is most like what I have heard of Greenland, and we will bear in here." They did so and that evening came ashore under a cape which had a boat on it, and there on



that cape lived Bjarni's father Herjólf, whence the cape took its name, being afterwards called Herjólfunes. Bjarni now went to his father, gave up his voyaging, and stayed with his father as long as Herjólf was alive, continuing to live there after him.

## OF GUÐRIÐ'S FATHER

*From the Saga of Eric the Red*

THERE was a warrior king whose name was Olaf, called Olaf the White. He was the son of Ingiald, son of Helgi, son of Olaf, son of Guðröð, son of Halfdan Whiteleg, king of Uppland. Olaf made Viking raids in the west, conquering Dublin in Ireland and the surrounding district and became king there. He married Auð the Deep-minded, daughter of Ketill "flatnef," son of Björn "buna," a famous man from Norway. Their son was called Thorsteinn the Red. Olaf fell in battle in Ireland and then Auð and Thorsteinn went to the Hebrides. There Thorsteinn married Thurið, the daughter of Eyvind Eastman and sister of Helgi the Lean. They had many children. Thorsteinn became a warrior king and a partner of Earl Sigurd the Mighty, son of Eysteinn "glumra." They conquered Caithness and Sutherland, Ross and Moray, and more than half of Scotland. Thorsteinn became king of this part of the country but the Scots betrayed him and he fell there in battle. Auð was in Caithness when she heard of his fall. She had a ship built secretly in a wood and when she was ready set sail for Orkney. There she gave in marriage Thorsteinn the Red's daughter Gró, who became the mother of Grelöð, whom Earl Thorfinn Skull-Cleaver married. After that Auð set out to look for Iceland with twenty free men on

board her ship. She made Iceland and spent the first winter there with her brother Björn at Bjarnarhöfn. Later on, taking possession of all the dale country between the river Dögurð and the river Skraumuhlaup, Auð lived at Hvamm. She had a place of prayer at Krosshólar where she had crosses set up for she was baptized and a good Christian.

Many noble men accompanied Auð out to Iceland, men who had been captured on raids in the west and who were looked on as slaves. One of these was Vífill. He came of a good family but had been made prisoner in the west and was regarded as a slave until Auð set him free. When Auð gave homes to her crew Vífill asked her why she had not given him one as she had the others. Auð replied that it made no difference to him for he would be accounted a distinguished man as he was. Afterwards she gave him Vífilstal and he lived there. He had a wife and Thorgeirr and Thorbjörn were their sons. They were promising men and grew up with their father.

■

## WHY GUÐRIÐ WENT TO GREENLAND

*From the Saga of Eric the Red*

**T**HORGEIRR Vífilsson took a wife, marrying Arnora, daughter of Einarr of Laugarbrekka, son of Sigmund, son of Ketill "thistil," who had taken possession of Thistilsfjord. Thorbjörn Vífilsson married Einarr's other daughter Hallveig, and with her he acquired land at Laugarbrekka, in Hellisvellir. Thorbjörn moved there and became a very eminent man. He was a local chief<sup>1</sup> and had a fine estate. Thorbjörn had a daughter Guðrið who was very beautiful and a notable woman in every way.

There was a man called Orm living at Arnarstapi whose wife was named Halldís. Orm was a good farmer and a great friend of Thorbjörn's. Guðrið was fostered in his house for a long time. There was a man called Thorgeirr living at Thorgeirsfell. He was wealthy but had been freed from slavery: he had a son named Einarr who was handsome, well-bred, and a great dandy. Einarr made trading voyages between Iceland and Norway in which he was most successful; he used to spend alternate winters in either country. Now it must be told that one autumn

<sup>1</sup> *Goði*—the name given to the eminent settler whose homestead formed the nucleus of a little community at the time of the Settlement of Iceland (A.D. 874-930). The *Goði* of a district was acknowledged the leader in matters civil and religious.

when Einarr was in Iceland he took his goods out to Snaefellsnes to sell them and came to Arnarstapi; Orm invited him to stay there and Einarr accepted, for they were friends. Einarr's goods were carried into an outhouse; he unpacked them and showing them to Orm and his household asked Orm to take what he liked. Orm accepted Einarr's offer, declaring that Einarr was a good sailor and an exceedingly lucky man, and while they were busy over the goods a woman passed before the door of the outhouse. Einarr asked Orm, "Who is that beautiful woman who passed by the door there, I have not seen her here before?" Orm replied, "That is my foster-daughter Guðrið, daughter of farmer Thorbjörn of Laugarbrekka. "She will be a good match," said Einarr, "but has she been proposed to already?" Orm answered, "Certainly she has been courted, friend, and she is not easily to be won. It is clear that both she and her father will demand much of a man." "Be that as it may," said Einarr, "she is the woman I intend to ask in marriage. I should like you to broach this subject for me to her father and urge my suit with all your skill, and I will reward you to the full of my friendship in return. Farmer Thorbjörn will surely see that it will be good for our families to become kin; he is a man of very high repute and has a good estate, but I have heard that his wealth is not what it once was. Now, neither I nor my father lack land or goods and Thorbjörn will find these a great assistance if my suit is accepted." "I consider myself your friend," answered Orm, "yet I am reluctant to undertake this suit, because Thorbjörn is proud and moreover most ambitious." Einarr said that nothing would

content him but that the proposal should be made. Orm said he should have his way. Einarr travelled back south until he reached home.

Some time later Thorbjörn held an autumn feast as was his custom, for he was very generous. Orm of Arnarstapi and many other friends of Thorbjörn's came to it. Orm spoke to Thorbjörn and said that Einarr of Thorgeirsfell had been with him a short time ago and that he had become a man who promised to do well. Then Orm made the proposal to Einarr, saying that such a marriage would be most suitable in various ways — "You will find it a great help, farmer, in money matters." Thorbjörn replied, "I did not expect to hear you suggest that I should marry my daughter to the son of a slave. You evidently think I am not so well off as I once was since you give me such advice. My daughter shall not go back to you since you think so poor a match fit for her." Afterwards Orm and all the other guests went back to their homes but Guðrið stayed behind with her parents and was at home that winter.

Now in the spring Thorbjörn held a feast; it was well set out, a splendid feast and many men came to it. At the feast Thorbjörn called for a hearing and made a speech: "I have lived here for a long time and have met with goodwill and affection from people and I think that our dealings with one another have been pleasant, but now I begin to find myself hard up, though hitherto I have been looked on as a man of means. Now I would rather give up my farm than lose my reputation, rather leave the country than disgrace my family. I am thinking of claiming the

promise my friend Eric the Red made me when we parted in Breiðafjörð. I mean to go to Greenland this summer if things go as I wish." Thorbjörn's announcement of this plan greatly concerned his audience as he had long been much liked, but they were convinced that he had set this idea so firmly before him that it would be useless to try to dissuade him from it. Thorbjörn made his guests presents and the feast was brought to an end, and after that everyone returned to his home. Thorbjörn sold his estates and bought a ship which was laid up at the mouth of Hraunhöfn. Thirty men undertook the voyage with him. There were Orm of Arnarstapi and his wife, also those of Thorbjörn's friends who would not part from him; afterwards they put to sea. When they sailed the weather was favourable, but when they reached the open sea the fair wind dropped and they encountered bad weather and things went badly with them that summer. On top of that, illness attacked their company and Orm and his wife Hall-dís and half their number died. The sea began to get rough and they met with much hardship and misery in every way, yet they made Herjólfssnes in Greenland at the very beginning of winter. Now a man called Thorkell lived at Herjólfssnes, a worthy man and an excellent farmer. He received Thorbjörn and all his shipmates in his house for the winter and treated them royally, to their great content.

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## GUÐRIÐ AND THE PROPHETESS

*From the Saga of Eric the Red*

**A**T this time there was a great famine in Greenland: those who had been out fishing had caught little and some of them had not come back. There was a woman in the Settlement whose name was Thorbjörg: she was a prophetess and was known as Little Sibyl.<sup>1</sup> She had had nine sisters all of whom had the gift of prophecy, but she was the only one left alive. In the winter it was Thorbjörg's custom to go round to feasts and men used to invite her to their homes, especially those who were curious about their future or the crops of the year. As Thorkell was the most influential farmer in the neighbourhood he thought that he ought to find out how soon the bad season then prevailing would come to an end. Thorkell invited the prophetess to his house and prepared a good reception for her, as was the custom when a woman of her kind came as a guest. A seat of honour was made ready for her and a cushion duly stuffed with hen's feathers laid under it. And when she and the man who had been sent to meet her arrived in the evening she was dressed in this fashion. She had on a blue cloak set with precious stones right down to the hem and fastened with a strap; round her neck she wore

<sup>1</sup> *Lítil-völva*. The word *völva* means a prophetess, witch, a woman gifted with the power of foretelling the future.



glass beads; on her head she had a black lamb's wool cap with a white catskin lining. In her hand she held a staff with a knob; it was decorated with brass and set with precious stones from the knob downwards. She had a girdle of amadou about her and on it a large skin pouch in which she kept the charms she needed for her sorcery. On her feet she had hairy calf-skin shoes with long stout thongs which had big lateen buttons at the end. On her hands she was wearing catskin gloves which were white inside and furry.

When she came in everyone felt bound to greet her in a becoming fashion. She answered people as she felt towards them. Farmer Thorkell took the wise-woman by the hand and led her to the seat which had been prepared for her. Then he asked her to look at the herds and the household and the home. She had not much to say about all these. Tables were set up in the evening and there remains to be told what food was placed before her. Goat's milk porridge was made for her and a dish prepared of the hearts of every kind of animal then to be found. She had a brass spoon and a knife with the point broken off; it had a handle of walrus tusk mounted with a double ring of copper. When the tables were cleared away Thorkell went up to Thorbjörg and asked what she thought of the house and its ways, and how soon he might know what he had asked and what everyone was longing to know. She replied that she could say nothing until the next morning after a night's sleep there.

Late on the next day what she needed to work her spell was made ready. She asked if women might be brought to

her who knew the charm called "Varðlokkur"<sup>2</sup> which was needed for the spell. As there were no such women the farm was searched for someone who knew the charm. Then Guðrið said, "I am neither skilled in magic nor a wise-woman, but my foster-mother Halldís in Iceland taught me the charm she called "Varðlokkur." "You are wise in season," answered Thorbjörg. "The charm and the procedure are such that I am determined to give no help," said Guðrið. "I am a Christian." "It might happen that you could help the company here and yet be no worse for it," said Thorbjörg. "I look to Thorkell, however, to provide all I need." Thereupon Thorkell so urged Guðrið that she said she would do as he wished. Then the women made a ring around the seið<sup>3</sup>-platform on which Thorbjörg sat, and Guðrið sang the charm so sweetly and so well that no one remembered hearing it sung so beautifully before. The wise-woman thanked her for the song and said that many spirits had come, who before had willed to keep aloof and refused them any service, for they thought what had been sung so beautifully — "And," she continued, "much is now clear to me which before was concealed both from myself and others. I can state that this famine will not last beyond the present winter, and when spring comes the season will improve. The sickness that has long troubled you will disappear sooner than you had hoped. And, Guðrið, I shall reward you at once for the help you have given us, for now your fate is clear to me. You shall make the best marriage you can here in Green-

<sup>2</sup> A protective charm.

<sup>3</sup> The platform from which the seið or spell was worked.

land, though it will not last long, for now your way leads to Iceland where a great and noble lineage will spring from you and a bright ray shall shine over your line. But now farewell and health to you, my daughter." Afterwards people went up to the wise-woman and each one asked her what he most wanted to know. She was ready to impart information and most of what she said came true. Thereafter she was sent for from another farm to which she now went.

Then Thorbjörn was sent for; he would not stay at home where such pagan rites were being observed. After the beginning of spring the weather soon improved as Thorbjörg had said. Then Thorbjörn prepared a ship and sailed until he came to Brattahlíð. Eric received him with open arms and said he was glad that he had come there. Thorbjörn and his family stayed with him that winter and Thorbjörn's crew found lodgings with the farmers in the neighbourhood. Afterwards in the spring Eric gave Thorbjörn land at Stokkanes and a fine farm was built there in which he lived thenceforward.

## LEIF ERICSON'S VISIT TO NORWAY

*From the Saga of Eric the Red*

HOW Eric had a wife called Thjóðhild and had two sons by her — Thorsteinn and Leif. They both bid fair to be great men. Thorsteinn stayed at home with his parents and in the whole of Greenland there was at that time no one who showed greater promise than he. Leif had sailed to Norway and was with King Olaf Tryggvason. When Leif sailed from Greenland in the summer he was blown out of his course to the Hebrides; it was long before they got a favourable wind thence and they stayed there until far into the summer. Leif fell in love with a woman named Thorgunna who was of noble family and whom Leif perceived was skilled in sorcery.<sup>1</sup> When Leif was about to sail away Thorgunna begged to go with him: Leif asked her if her kinsfolk would approve at all, and she told him that she did not care what they thought. Leif said that he could not carry off so highborn a woman in a strange country when he had so few men with him. "Your plan is not necessarily the best," said Thorgunna. "I must risk that," said Leif. "I tell you," said Thorgunna, "that I am not alone: I am with child and the child is yours. I prophesy I shall have a boy when the time comes, and though you pay no heed I should

<sup>1</sup> . . . *hon mundi kunna fleira en fátt eitt*. Lit . . . "she must know more than only a few things."

bring up the boy and send him to you in Greenland as soon as he is old enough to mix with men. I prophesy also that you will gain as much from having had a son by me as you deserve from our parting now. I myself mean to come to Greenland before I die." He gave her a gold ring and a mantle which had been woven in Greenland and a belt of walrus teeth. This boy came to Greenland and gave his name as Thorgils. Leif acknowledged him as his son. Some people say that this Thorgils came to Iceland in the summer of the Froðá miracle (A.D. 1100). Thorgils, however, lived afterwards in Greenland and it was thought that there was something strange about him as long as he lived. Leif and his men sailed away from the Hebrides and made Norway in the autumn. Leif went to the court of Olaf Tryggvason and the King held him in high regard: it was clear that he thought Leif a very cultured man. Once the King came to speak to Leif and asked him, "Do you intend to sail to Greenland this summer?" Leif answered, "I do, if it please you." "I think it will be a good plan," replied the King; "you shall go on my mission and preach Christianity in Greenland." Leif said that the King should decide but that he himself thought it would be difficult to carry out such a mission in Greenland. The King said that he knew of no one better fitted for the task than Leif—"and you will bring it good luck." "That will only be if I have your good luck," said Leif.

*(Here follows the accidental discovery of Wineland  
by Leif related in this version.)*

Leif landed in Ericsfjord and went home to Brattahlíð, where he was given a good welcome. He soon preached Christianity and the Catholic Faith to the country, making known to men the messages of King Olaf Tryggvason and telling them what great renown and glory followed on the practice of this religion. Eric was slow to give up his paganism, but Thjóðhild yielded to the new faith at once and a little way off from the farm had a church built which was called "Thjóðhild's Church." She and all those who accepted Christianity — and there were many — used to pray there. Thjóðhild would not live with Eric after she had become a Christian and this distressed him much.

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## LEIF'S DISCOVERY OF WINELAND

*From the Flatey Book*

NOW next after this<sup>1</sup> Bjarni Herjólfsson came over from Greenland on a visit to (Earl) Eric<sup>2</sup> who gave him a good welcome. Bjarni gave an account of the travels on which he had seen the strange countries, but he was blamed for his lack of enterprise, since he had nothing to report about these lands. Bjarni became one of the earl's officers but went out to Greenland the following summer.

There was now much talk about voyages and discovery. Leif, the son of Eric the Red, from Brattahlíð went to visit Bjarni Herjólfsson, bought a ship from him and collected a crew of altogether thirty-five men. Leif asked his father still to be leader of the expedition, but Eric was reluctant, saying that he was now an old man and less able to endure all the hardships than he had been. Leif said that of all the family he was still the one who would bring the best luck, whereupon Eric gave way to him and as soon as they were ready rode from home. When he was but a short distance from the ship the horse which he was riding stumbled so that he fell off and hurt his foot: at this Eric said, "I am not destined to discover more countries than this in which we are now living: we shall no longer keep one

<sup>1</sup> The death of Olaf Tryggvason. Sept. A.D. 1000.

<sup>2</sup> Part ruler of Norway after Olaf Tryggvason's death.

another company," and he went home to Brattahlíð. But Leif went on to his ship with his companions, amongst whom was a southerner called Tyrker. They fitted out their ship and when they were ready sailed out to sea and discovered first that country which Bjarni and his men had found last.<sup>3</sup> They sailed up to the land, cast anchor and, launching a boat, went ashore. They saw no grass; the interior was all great glaciers, and from these to the shore the land looked like one flat rock. The country seemed to them of no value and Leif said, "Unlike Bjarni we have not failed to come ashore in this country and I shall now give it a name and call it Helluland ("the land of flat stone"). After this they returned on board, then on putting to sea discovered the second land.<sup>4</sup> Again they sailed up to the land, cast anchor, launched a boat and went ashore. This country was level and wooded, and wherever they went were broad stretches of white sand, sloping gradually down to the sea. Leif said, "This land shall be given a name after its nature and shall be called Markland (woodland). They then returned to the ship as quickly as possible, sailing thence to the open sea with a northeast wind, and they were out two days before they saw land,<sup>5</sup> towards which they sailed. Coming to an island which lay to the north of the mainland they landed on it, and looking round — the weather being fine — saw that there was dew on the grass. It so happened that on putting their hands in the dew they carried it to their mouths and thought they

<sup>3</sup> Possibly Newfoundland or Labrador. See Introduction, Note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Possibly Nova Scotia. See Introduction, Note 1.

<sup>5</sup> Wineland — possibly the district round about the Barnstable Peninsula in Massachusetts. See Introduction, Note 1.



had never before tasted anything so sweet. After this they went back to their ship, and sailing into the sound which lay between the island and the cape jutting out to the north from the mainland they steered west past the cape. At ebb-tide it was very shallow there and their ship running aground they soon found themselves a long way from the sea: yet they were so eager to go ashore that they could not wait for the tide to rise under their ship but hurried on land where a river flowed out of a lake. As soon as the tide rose under their ship they took the boat, rowed to the ship, moved her up the river, then into the lake, where casting anchor they carried ashore their leather sleeping bags and put up temporary shelters, but later, making up their minds to stay there for the winter, they built large houses.

There was no lack of salmon and bigger salmon than they had seen before either in the river or the lake. In their eyes the general conditions of the country seemed so favourable that the cattle would need no fodder there in the winter time. There were no winter frosts: the grass only withered a little, and day and night were more evenly divided there than in Greenland or Iceland; on the shortest day the sun was up over the marks for Nones and breakfast-time.<sup>6</sup> When they had finished building their houses Leif said to his men, "Now I propose to divide our party into two and have the land explored: one half shall

<sup>6</sup> *Sol hafði þar eyktarstað ok dagmálastað um skammdegi.* Lit. "The sun had eykt-place and dagmál-place on the shortest day." In Iceland and Greenland on the shortest days of the year sunrise is after *dagmál*, sunset before *eykt*. Nones — the ecclesiastical ninth hour, three o'clock in the afternoon.

stay at home by the huts, while the other explores the country. The explorers must not go farther than they can return by the evening nor separate from one another." They did this now for a time, Leif by turns going with the explorers and staying at home by the huts. Leif was a big, strong man and most imposing in appearance: he was clever and a fine leader in every way.

It was discovered one evening that a man of their party was missing — Tyrker the southerner. Leif took this much to heart, for Tyrker had lived with Leif and his father for a long time and had been very fond of Leif as a child. Leif bitterly upbraided his companions and made ready to go in search of him accompanied by twelve others, but they had only gone a short distance from the huts when Tyrker came to meet them, and they received him joyfully. Leif soon noticed that his foster-father was in good spirits. Tyrker had a prominent forehead, roving eyes and insignificant features; he was short and unprepossessing in appearance but a skilful handicraftsman. Leif asked him, "Why are you so late, foster-father, and what made you separate from your companions?" Tyrker answered speaking for a long time in German, rolling his eyes and making faces, and they could not understand what he was saying, but after a time he said in Norse, "I did not go much farther than you, but I have some news to tell. I have found vines and grapes." "Is that true, foster-father?" asked Leif. "Undoubtedly it is true," said he. "I was born where there is no lack of vines or grapes." They went to sleep for that night and in the morning Leif addressed his crew: "We will now do two things, and each

day either gather grapes or cut down vines and fell trees for a cargo for my ship." This plan was agreed to and it is said that their ship's boat was filled with grapes. A cargo was cut for the ship and when spring came they made ready and sailed away, and Leif gave the country a name from its products, calling it Wineland. After this they put to sea and had a fair breeze until they sighted Greenland and the mountains under its glaciers. Then a man spoke up asking Leif, "Why are you steering the ship so much into the wind?" "I am attending to my steering and to other matters as well," answered Leif. "Do you see anything unusual?" They replied that they saw nothing out of the ordinary. "I do not know," said Leif, "whether it is a ship or a reef I see." Now they saw it and said that it was a reef, but he was so much more keen-sighted than they that he perceived men on the reef. "Now," said Leif, "I wish to tack so as to reach them if they need our assistance and it be necessary to give them help, and if they are not peaceably disposed we and not they have command of the situation." So they approached the reef and, lowering their sail and casting anchor, launched a second small boat which they had brought with them. Tyrker asked who was the leader (of the men on the reef). He replied that his name was Thorir and that he was a Norseman, "But what is your name?" Leif gave his name. "Are you the son of Eric the Red of Brattahlíð?" asked Thorir. Leif replied that he was and said, "Now I want to take you all on board my ship, with as much of your goods as the ship will hold." These terms were accepted and they afterwards sailed to Ericsfjord

with this freight until they arrived at Brattahlíð. When he had unshipped the cargo Leif invited Thorir and his wife Guðrið and three others to stay with him, finding lodgings for the rest of the crews, both Thorir's men and his own. Leif rescued fifteen people from the reef and from that time was called "Leif the Lucky": he won both wealth and renown. That winter Thorir's party was visited with serious illness and Thorir and a large number of his men died.

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THORVALD ERICSON'S EXPEDITION AND  
DEATH*From the Flatey Book*

NOW there was much talk about Leif's expedition to Wineland, his brother Thorvald maintaining that the country had not been thoroughly enough explored. Leif said to Thorvald, "You shall go to Wineland in my ship if you want to, brother, but I wish the ship first to fetch the wood Thorir had on the reef." This was done. On Leif's advice Thorvald made ready for this expedition with forty men. They fitted out their ship and put to sea, and there is no account of their voyage till Thorvald came to Leif's base in Wineland, where they laid up their ship and passed the winter in quiet, catching fish for food. In the spring, however, Thorvald said that they were to put their ship in order and that some of them were to take the ship's boat along the western coast and explore there that summer. They found it a pleasant wooded country: the woods ran close down to the sea, there were white sands and also large numbers of islands and shallows. They found no trace of habitation by men or beasts, but on an island to the west they found a wooden barn.<sup>1</sup> Not finding further human handiwork they turned back, coming to Leif's base in the autumn. The following summer Thor-

<sup>1</sup> Possibly a deserted Indian wigwam, made of poles and bark.

vald set out to the east in his trading ship and sailed along the more northerly part of the coast. They met with a severe squall off a cape<sup>2</sup> and were driven ashore, breaking the keel under their ship so that they had to spend a long time there repairing their vessel. Then Thorvald said to his companions, "I suggest that we set up the keel on this cape and call it Keelness," and so they did. Afterwards they sailed away eastwards along the coast and into the mouths of the nearest fjords and to a projecting headland which was all overgrown with woods. When they had anchored their ship and put out a gangway to land, Thorvald and all his crew went ashore and he said, "This is a fine place: I should like to make my home here." Then they went back to the ship, and on the sands in beyond the headland they saw three mounds. Going up to them they discovered that they were three skin canoes with three men under each, so they divided their party and captured all the men but one, who escaped in his canoe. They killed the eight and then returned to the headland, and looking about saw within the fjords certain mounds which they concluded were dwelling places.

After this so great a heaviness came over them that they could not keep awake but all fell asleep. Then a cry was uttered above them so that they all woke up. The cry was, "Awake Thorvald and all your company if you wish to save your life. Go to your ship with all your men and sail from the land as quickly as possible." Then countless skin canoes made towards them from within the fjord. At this Thorvald exclaimed, "We must put our war-shields along

<sup>2</sup> Possibly Cape Cod. See Introduction, Note 1.

the side of the boat and make as stout a defence as we can, but offer little attack." They did this and the savages<sup>3</sup> after shooting at them for a time fled away each as fast as he could. Then Thorvald asked his men if they were wounded in any way, but they replied that none had been hurt. "I'm wounded in the armpit," said he, "an arrow flew between the gunwale and the shield under my arm. Here it is and it will be my death. Now I advise you to make ready to go back as soon as possible, but take me to the headland where I thought it would be excellent to live. When I said I should stay there for a time I may have been speaking the truth. Bury me there with a cross at my head, and another at my feet and call it Crossness for ever after." At that time Greenland had been converted, although Eric the Red died before the coming of Christianity. Now Thorvald died, and after carrying out his orders his men went away to join their companions. They told one another what had happened to them, and spent the winter there gathering grapes and vines, with which to load the ship. In the spring they made ready to return to Greenland and arrived with their ship in Ericsfjord with great news for Leif.

<sup>3</sup> *Skraelingar* — See Note 7 of next section.

THORSTEINN ERICSON'S UNSUCCESSFUL  
VOYAGE AND DEATH*From the Flatey Book*

IN Greenland in the meantime it happened that Thorsteinn of Ericsfjord had married Guðrið Thorbjörn's daughter, who, as has already been mentioned, had been the wife of Thorbjörn Eastman. Thorsteinn Ericson now wished to go to Wineland for the body of his brother Thorvald, so he prepared the same ship and, with a crew of twenty-five men, chosen for their strength and size, and his wife Guðrið, he put to sea when all was ready and sailed out of sight of land. They tossed about on the open sea all summer not knowing where they were, and at the end of the first week of winter they made the land at Lysufjord in Greenland in the Western Settlement.

Thorsteinn looked for lodgings for the party and procured homes for all his crew, but he and his wife found nowhere to go so stayed on board ship two nights or so. Christianity had at that time been newly introduced into Greenland. Early one morning some men came to their tent and the leader asked what people were within the tent. Thorsteinn answered, "There are two, but who are you who ask?" (The man answered,) "My name is Thorsteinn, and I am called Thorsteinn the Black, and I have come to offer both of you, husband and wife, a home with me." Thorsteinn (Ericson) said that he would ask his wife's opin-



ion, but she told him to decide so he accepted this invitation. "Well," said the man, "I shall come for you tomorrow with a cart-horse, for I am well able to entertain you, although you will find it lonely at my house since there are only two of us, my wife and myself; then I like having my own way and, moreover, my faith is different from yours, though I think yours is the better." So in the morning Thorsteinn the Black came for them with the horse and they went to stay with him and he treated them well. Guðrið was a woman of imposing appearance and clever, and she readily adapted herself to strangers.

Early in the winter Thorsteinn Ericson's party was attacked by plague and many of his companions died there. He ordered coffins to be made for the bodies of those who died and had them carried on to the ship and stored there, "For I wish," said he, "to have all the bodies moved to Ericsfjord in the summer." Now a short time after this the plague came to Thorsteinn (the Black's) house, and his wife who was called Grimhild was the first to fall ill. She was full of energy and as strong as a man, but was prostrated by the plague, and soon after Thorsteinn Ericson caught it and they both lay ill at the same time and Grimhild, wife of Thorsteinn the Black, died. When she was dead Thorsteinn (the Black) went out of the room to fetch a plank on which to lay the body and Guðrið said, "Do not be long away, my Thorsteinn." He replied that he would not. Then Thorsteinn Ericson exclaimed, "Our hostess is behaving in an amazing fashion now, for she is raising herself up on her elbows and thrusting her feet over the end of the bed and groping after

her shoes," and at that moment, Thorsteinn the master of the house coming in, Grimhild lay down at once and every beam in the room creaked. Thorsteinn now made a coffin for Grimhild's body and carried it away and looked after it. He was both big and strong, but it needed all his might to get her out of the house. Thorsteinn Ericson's illness now grew worse and he died. His wife, Guðrið, scarcely understood what had happened. They were all in the room at the time and Guðrið had seated herself on a chair before the bench on which her husband, Thorsteinn, was lying. Then Thorsteinn, the master of the house, taking Guðrið off the chair in his arms sat down with her on another bench opposite Thorsteinn's corpse and talked to her about the matter in many ways, comforting her and promising to accompany her to Ericsfjord with the bodies of Thorsteinn her husband and his companions. "I shall also engage more servants here to wait on you and entertain you," said he. She thanked him. Then Thorsteinn Ericson sat up asking, "Where is Guðrið?" He repeated this three times but she kept silent. Then she asked Thorsteinn, the master of the house, "Shall I answer his question or not?" He told her not to answer. Then, crossing the floor and sitting down on the chair, with Guðrið on his knees, Thorsteinn, the master of the house, spoke, saying, "What do you want, namesake?" After a time he replied, "I am anxious to tell Guðrið of the fate in store for her, so that she may be more reconciled to my death, for I have come to a good resting-place. I have this to tell you, Guðrið, that you will marry an Icclander, you will have a long married life together and many men will spring from

you, energetic, illustrious, noble, sweet and well spoken of. You will travel from Greenland to Norway, and thence to Iceland, where you will build a home and where both of you will live long, though you will survive him. You will go abroad and make a pilgrimage to Rome, afterwards returning to your home in Iceland where a church will be built, and you will remain there taking the vows of a nun, and there you will die." Then Thorsteinn sank down and his body was prepared and carried to the ship. Thorsteinn, the master of the house, faithfully carried out all he had promised Guðrið. In the spring he sold his land and livestock, and accompanying Guðrið to the ship with all his possessions he put it in order and engaged a crew and then sailed to Ericsfjord. The bodies were now buried by the church. Guðrið went to Leif at Brattahlíð, while Thorsteinn built a house on Ericsfjord, staying there as long as he lived, being held the most courteous of men.

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## THORFINN KARLSEFNI'S EXPEDITION

*From the Saga of Eric the Red*

THERE was a man named Thorfinn Karlsefni, son of Thorð Horsehead, who lived in the north in Skagafjord at Reynisnes, now known as Staðir. Karlsefni came of a good family and was well-to-do. His mother's name was Thorunn. He made trading voyages and was considered a good seaman. One summer Karlsefni put his ship in order with intent to sail to Greenland. Snorri Grimólfsson from Breiðafjord and another called Thor-Thorbrandsson from Álptafjord joined him, and they had forty men with them. There was a man called Bjarni hall Gamlason from Austfjord. These made ready their ship the same summer as Karlsefni and planned to sail to Greenland; there were forty men on board. They put out with the two ships as soon as they were ready. It is not told how long they were at sea, but in the end both these ships came to Ericsfjord in the autumn. Eric and others of his countrymen rode to the ships, and they began to trade briskly. The captains invited Eric to take what he wanted of their cargoes, Eric showing himself as munificent to them in return by inviting both crews to his home in Brattahlíð for the winter. The traders accepted this offer and went with Eric. Thereupon the goods were conveyed to Brattahlíð where there was no lack of fine large out-houses in which to store them. The traders enjoyed them-

selves at Eric's that winter. But when Christmas drew near Eric began to be less cheerful than usual. On one occasion Karlsefni came to speak to him and asked him, "Is there anything weighing on your mind, Eric? It seems to me that you are more reserved than you used to be. You have treated us in magnificent fashion and we are bound to repay you to the best of our ability, so tell us what is making you melancholy." Eric answered, "You have thanked me well and courteously. I have no complaint to make, but I should not like it said that the Christmas now at hand was the worst you had ever spent." Karlsefni replied, "Do not worry about that. We have malt, flour and corn in our ships, and you shall have as much as you want of such things and prepare as great a Christmas feast as you deem fit." Eric accepted this offer. Then the Christmas banquet was prepared and it was so magnificent that people thought they had scarcely ever before seen such a splendid feast. After Christmas Karlsefni asked Eric for Guðrið's hand, since it appeared to him that Eric would have the right to bestow her in marriage. Moreover, he thought her a beautiful and gifted woman. Eric replied that he would readily accept his suit, but said that Guðrið was a good match, adding that he thought it likely that she would be fulfilling her destiny in marrying him and that he had heard good of Karlsefni. Then the question was broached to Guðrið, and she said that she would take the course advised by Eric, and it was not long before this marriage was agreed on; the feast was prolonged and the wedding took place. There was great rejoicing in Brattahlíð during the winter. Many games of chess were played,

there was saga-telling and much else to make a house lively.

There was much discussion at Brattahlíð about men going to look for Wineland the Good, and it was rumoured that the land to be found there was of excellent quality. The end of it was that Karlsefni and Snorri made ready their ship with intent to look for Wineland that summer. Bjarni and Thorhall and the crew which had accompanied them decided to take part in the venture. A man named Thorvarð, married to Freydís, an illegitimate daughter of Eric the Red's, went with them, and so did Thorvald, son of Eric, and Thorhall, known as the Hunter. He had long accompanied Eric on hunting expeditions in the summer and had much in his care. Thorhall was tall of stature, dark and troll-like. He was ageing, difficult to get on with, taciturn, generally sparing of speech, crafty but at the same time abusive and always ready to stir up trouble. He had had little to do with Christianity since it came to Greenland. Thorhall was not much liked, yet for a long time Eric had been in the habit of asking his advice. He was on board with Thorvald and his men because he had wide experience of unpeopled countries. They had the ship which Thorbjörn had brought to Greenland, and they decided to go on the expedition with Karlsefni and his men, most of the crew being Greenlanders. There were a hundred and sixty men in all on board their ship. After this they sailed out to the Western Settlement and the Bear Islands, whence they sailed away with a northerly wind. They were at sea two days, then they discovered land<sup>1</sup> and rowing

<sup>1</sup> Labrador or Newfoundland.

ashore in boats explored it, finding there stones which were so large that two men could easily have lain stretched out on them feet to feet. There were many white foxes there. They gave the country a name, calling it Helluland. They had sailed with the wind from the north for two days when they saw before them a densely wooded country with many animals. Off the mainland to the southeast lay an island where they found bear, and this they called Bear Island.<sup>2</sup> The mainland where the wood was they called Markland. Then when two days had passed they saw land, and sailing in close to it they arrived at the headland. They cruised along the coast which lay to starboard. It was harbourless with long strips of shore and stretches of sand. They went to land in boats, and finding the keel of a ship on the headland they called it Keelness.<sup>3</sup> They also gave a name to the strips of shore calling them Furðustrandir (wonder-beaches) because they had taken so long to sail past. Then the land became indented with bays and into one of these they steered the ships.

Now when Leif was with King Olaf Tryggvason the King had told him to preach Christianity to Greenland and gave him two Scots, a man called Haki and a woman Hekja. The King told Leif to accept these two in case he should ever need anyone fleet of foot for they were swifter than deer. Leif and Eric procured these two for Karlsefni. When they had sailed past Furðustrandir they put the Scots ashore, telling them to run south and find out what kind of country it was and come back within three days. They

<sup>2</sup> Possibly Sable Island. See Introduction, Note 1.

<sup>3</sup> Cape Cod. See Introduction, Note 1.

were dressed in a garment they called a "kiafal," which was made with a hood at the top. It was open at the sides and sleeveless and fastened between the legs by means of a button and loop. Otherwise their bodies were bare. They cast anchor and lay there while the Scots were away. When three days had gone by these two came running down from the mainland, one of them had grapes in his hand and the other wild wheat. Karlsefni said that they seemed to have found a goodly land. They took them up on to the ship and continued their way until they came to where a fjord ran up into the land, into which they turned with the ships. At its mouth lay an island round which were strong currents. They called it Straumsey (Current island).<sup>4</sup> There were so many birds there that it was scarcely possible to walk without treading on the eggs. They held along the fjord, calling it Straumsfjord,<sup>5</sup> and having taken the cargo from the ships made ready to stay. They had with them all kinds of cattle, and they explored the resources of the land. There were mountains there and the view was beautiful, and they did nothing but explore the country. There was plenty of grass. They were there for the winter, a severe one for which they had not prepared in any way. It became difficult to obtain food and game grew scanty. Then they went out on to the island in the hope of coming across some game or jetsam. There was little food, however, although their cattle thrived. Afterwards they besought God to send them something for food, but He did not grant their prayer so quickly as they had hoped. Thorhall dis-

<sup>4</sup> Possibly Fisher's Island by the eastern entrance to Long Island Sound. See Introduction, Note 1.

<sup>5</sup> Possibly Long Island Sound.



appeared and men went to look for him. Three days passed by thus. On the fourth day Karlsefni and Bjarni found Thorhall on a crag, lying face upwards with his eyes and mouth wide open and his nostrils dilated, while he clawed and pulled himself, muttering something. They asked him why he was lying there. He said that it did not matter to them and told them not to wonder at it, saying that he was old enough to make it unnecessary for them to trouble to look after him. They told him to go home with them and he did so. A little while afterwards a whale floated ashore and men crowded to it and cut it up, yet none of them knew what kind of whale it was. Karlsefni knew a good deal about whales, yet even he did not know. The cooks of the party boiled the whale and they ate it and were all made ill by it, then Thorhall came up and said, "Has not the red-bearded one proved more powerful than your Christ? This is my reward for my poem to Thor in whom I have all my trust! Seldom has he failed me." And when they heard this they would not use any more of the whale but threw it over the cliffs and prayed God to have mercy on them. Soon they were able to go out rowing and there was then no lack of food. In the spring they went into Straumsfjord and got provisions from two sources, game from the mainland and eggs and fish from the sea.

Now they held a consultation about their expedition but were divided in their opinions. Thorhall the hunter wanted to travel north along Furðustrandir past Kjalarnes and look for Wineland by this route, but Karlsefni wanted broadened out towards the south and that it would be to go south and eastwards; his opinion was that the land

wisest to explore the country both ways. So Thorhall made ready out by the island with only nine men to accompany him on the expedition, for all the others went with Karlsefni. One day when Thorhall was carrying water up on to his ship he drank some and made up the following verse:

I was told when I came here  
That I should have the best of drink.  
This country seems to me most drear;  
Plain water from the well-spring's brink,  
O'er which I stoop to fill my pail  
(A warrior trained to fight in mail),  
Is all the wine I've ever tasted,  
My sojourn here is surely wasted.

After this they put out from the land, and Karlsefni accompanied them past the island. Before they hoisted sail Thorhall recited a verse:

Let us now go home once more  
To our kinsfolk back again;  
Launch the ship that it explore  
The fair, broad highway of the main.  
Leave the men at war with ease  
To go on living as they please,  
Those who really like this land  
Cooking whales on Furðustrand.

Later they separated and Thorhall and his party sailed north past Furðustrandir and Kjalarnes. They wanted to cruise westwards but encountered bad weather and were

driven ashore in Ireland, where they were enslaved and subjected to very harsh treatment. There, according to merchants' reports, Thorhall lost his life.

Karlsefni, Snorri, Bjarni and the others voyaged south along the coast, sailing for a long time until they reached a river which flowed down from the land through a lake and thence out to sea.<sup>6</sup> There were large gravel banks opposite the mouth of the river which could only be entered at high tide. Karlsefni and his companions sailed into the estuary and gave the land a name — Hóp. They found wheatfields growing wild in the hollows and vines on every ridge and all the streams were full of fish. They dug pits at the highwater mark and at ebb-tide these were found to contain halibut. In the woods were great numbers of all kinds of animals. They stayed there with their cattle for a fortnight, enjoying themselves unaware of any danger. But early one morning while they were looking all round they caught sight of nine canoes made of skin. Those in the boats waved staves in the air as if they were wielding flails, swinging them from east to west. Then Karlsefni said, "What does this mean?" Snorri answered him, "It may be a sign of peace. Let us take a white shield and hold it up to them." This they did and the strangers came up wondering at them as they came ashore. They were ugly-looking little men with unsightly hair, large eyes and broad cheeks. They stayed for some time lost in amazement, then rowed away south past the headland. Karlsefni and his men had made their base up above the lake, some of the huts being near the water, others farther

<sup>6</sup> Possibly the Hudson River. See Introduction, Note 1.

off. They stayed there for that winter. No snow fell and all the cattle remained grazing in the open.

Early one morning at the beginning of spring they saw a large number of canoes rowing round the headland from the south, so many that the sea was black with them; staves were waved from every boat. Karlsefni and his men raised their shields and held a market with them. The strangers wanted most to buy red cloth. They also wanted to buy swords and spears, but Karlsefni and Snorri forbade this. In exchange for the cloth they gave dark skins, one for every span's width of cloth, which they bound round their heads, and this went on for some time. When they ran short of cloth they cut it into strips, each of which was only a finger's breadth wide. For these strips the Skraelings<sup>7</sup> gave as much as before or even more. It happened that a bull belonging to Karlsefni charged out of the wood bellowing loudly. The Skraelings were terrified, sprang to their canoes and rowed south along the coast. For the next three weeks there was not a sign of them. At the end of that time they saw a grand fleet of the Skraelings' boats bearing down on them from the south like a flood. The Skraelings yelled loudly and waved their staves from west to east. Karlsefni's men took red shields and raised them in answer. Then they met and fought. There was a heavy shower of missiles, as the Skraelings had war slings. Karlsefni and Snorri saw that the Skraelings hoisted up on poles a great dark ball which they let fly into the air over the

<sup>7</sup> The description given of these people would suit either Red Indians or Esquimaux, but the mention of the food and strange weapon ("balista"?) they used suggests Red Indians.

troops and which made a terrible noise where it came down.<sup>8</sup> This so alarmed Karlsefni and his men that their only wish was to flee upstream, for it seemed to them that the forces of the Skraelings were bearing down on them from all sides. They did not make a stand until they reached some rocks where they put up a hard fight. Freydis came out and seeing that they were retreating shouted, "Are fine men like you running away from such worthless wretches? I should have thought you would have slaughtered them like cattle. If I had weapons I am sure I should put up a better fight than any of you." They gave no heed to what she said. Freydis wanted to follow them, but she went rather slowly because she was with child. Yet she went after them into the wood, pursued by the Skraelings. She found before her a dead man, Thorbrand Snorason with a flat stone through his head. She picked up the sword which lay by him and prepared to defend herself with it. Then the Skraelings came at her. She uncovered a breast and struck it with the flat of her sword. The Skraelings were alarmed at this and fled to their ships and sailed away. Karlsefni and his men returned to her and praised her courage. Four Skraelings fell but only two of Karlsefni's men, although they had been outnumbered. They went to their huts wondering what mob had attacked them from the land side. They decided that there could only have been one force, that which came from the ships, and that the other force must have been an hallucination. The Skraelings found a dead man with an axe lying beside him.

<sup>8</sup> This weapon may be the Algonquin "balista" described in Schoolcraft's *Indian Tribes of the United States*, 1, 85.

One of them picked up the axe and hewed at a tree; the others followed suit and they thought it a treasure for it bit well. Afterwards one of them hewed at a stone and the axe broke. He flung it down thinking it was worthless as it did not resist the stone. Karlsefni and his men now realized that though the country was a goodly one yet they would live in perpetual fear of trouble with the natives. They therefore decided to return to their own country and made ready to depart. They sailed northward and found five Skraelings in skins asleep. There were beside them small cakes of animal marrow mixed with blood.<sup>9</sup> They concluded that these men had been sent from the country<sup>10</sup> and killed them. Later on they found a headland on which were many animals. It looked like one cake of dung from the animals which lay there at night. Then they came again to Straumsfjord where they found abundance of all they required.

Some men say that Bjarni and Guðrið remained there with a hundred men, going on farther, while Karlsefni and Snorri journeyed south with forty men, spending only two months at Hóp and returning the same summer.<sup>11</sup>

They concluded that the mountains in Hóp and those which they now found were all one, for it was a striking coincidence that they lay at an equal distance from Straumsfjord in either direction.<sup>12</sup> They went on their way and

<sup>9</sup> Pemmican.

<sup>10</sup> Possibly as spies.

<sup>11</sup> This narrative's version of the death of Thorvald which occurs here is suppressed as the account in the Flatey Book (see § 8 above) seems more reliable.

<sup>12</sup> A twofold approach to Hóp from the mouth of the Straumsfjord is

spent the third winter in Straumsfjord. There was much dissension amongst the men at this time, for the unmarried claimed the wives of the married. Karlsefni's son, Snorri, had been born there the first autumn and he was three years old when they left.

On leaving Wineland they had a southerly wind and came to Markland where they found five Skraelings, one bearded man and two women and two children. Karlsefni's men captured the boys, but the others escaped, disappearing underground. They kept the boys with them, taught them their language and baptized them. The boys said that their mother's name was Vaetildi and their father's Vaegi, that the land of the Skraelings was ruled by two kings, one called Avalldamon, the other Valldidida, and that there were no houses in their country, people living in caves or holes. They told them that opposite their own country on the other side lay a land whose inhabitants wore white clothes, uttered loud cries and carried poles to which were fastened strips of cloth.<sup>18</sup> It is thought that this country was Hvíttramannaland. Then Karlsefni came to Greenland and stayed the winter with Eric the Red.

Bjarni Grimólfsson drifted about on the Atlantic and came into waters harbouring the teredo-worm. Before they had time to realize it their ship was worm-eaten under them. They held a council as to what they should do. They had a boat coated with seal tar. It is said that the teredo

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contemplated, a route along the south coast of Long Island or Long Island Sound itself.

<sup>18</sup> The white clothes were possibly buckskin, the loud cries Red Indian warwhoops and the poles with their strips of cloth Red Indian flags.

does not eat through wood which has been treated with seal tar. The majority advised manning the boat with as many as it would hold, but when the trial was made it was found that it would only take half their number. Thereupon Bjarni said that the casting of lots and not rank should decide who was to go into the boat. Every man of them wanted to go into it, but it could not take them all, so they agreed to cast lots for the manning of the boat from the ship. The result was that Bjarni with about half his crew drew for the boat. Those on whom the lots fell left the ship, and when they had taken their places in the boat a young Icелander who had been one of Bjarni's companions asked, "Do you mean to leave me here, Bjarni?" Bjarni replied, "It looks like it." The Icелander said, "This is not what you promised my father when I left him and sailed away from Icелand with you. You said then that my fate should be yours. Bjarni said, "I see no way out of the dilemma, but what do you suggest?" The Icелander replied, "I see this way out, that we change places. You come here and I go there." Bjarni answered, "So be it. I see that you are eager to live and loath to die." They changed places, the man going into the boat and Bjarni on to the ship. It is said that Bjarni perished there in the teredo sea together with the men on board his ship. But the boat and her crew voyaged until they came to Dublin in Ireland, where they afterwards told this story.



FREYDÍS' EXPEDITION

*From the Flatey Book*

NOW talk began again about an expedition to Wineland, for the voyage thither was considered both profitable and honourable. The same summer that Karlsefni returned from Wineland there came from Norway to Greenland a ship commanded by two brothers, Helgi and Finnbogi, who stayed the winter in Greenland. These brothers were descended from an Icelandic family from Austfjord. Now it must be told that Freydís, Eric's daughter, set out from her house at Garð, visited the brothers Helgi and Finnbogi and asked them to go to Wineland with their ship and share with her all the profit they might make there. They agreed to this, and she went thence to see her brother Leif to ask him to give her the house that he had built in Wineland, but he made her the same answer as before, saying that he would lend the houses but not give them.<sup>1</sup> So Freydís and the brothers<sup>2</sup> came to an agreement that each should take thirty-five able-bodied men on board besides women, but Freydís broke the compact at once, taking with her five extra men whom she hid so that the brothers knew nothing about it till they arrived in Wineland. They now put to sea, having

<sup>1</sup> In the Flatey Book's version of Karlsefni's expedition Karlsefni asks Leif for his houses before setting out for Wineland.

<sup>2</sup> The text has Karlsefni, a slip for the brothers.

previously arranged to sail in company as far as possible and they did keep fairly near together, yet the brothers arrived somewhat in advance and carried their belongings up to Leif's houses. When Freydís arrived and her ship had been unloaded and baggage taken up to the camp she demanded, "Why have you brought your stuff in here?" "Because we believed," said they, "that the definite agreement made with us was going to be kept." "Leif lent the houses to me and not to you," she declared, whereupon Helgi said, "We brothers lag behind you in wickedness," and they carried out their baggage and built a hut up from the sea and the shore of the lake, putting all in good order while Freydís had wood cut for her ship.

Winter drew on now and the brothers suggested playing games as an amusement. They did so for a time until they began to disagree, and this led to a quarrel between them so that the games ceased and there was no going from one camp to the other. This went on far into the winter. Then early one morning Freydís got out of bed, dressed, but put on no shoes or stockings, though it was such weather that there was a heavy dew; taking her husband's cloak about her she went to the brother's house, up to the door, which had been left ajar by a man who had gone out a short time before. She opened the door and stood in the entrance for a time without saying anything, but Finnbogi who was lying awake on the innermost side of the room asked, "What do you want here, Freydís?" She replied, "I want you to get up and come out with me. I want to talk to you." He did so and they went to a log which lay under the wall of the house and sat down on it. "How are you

liking things here?" she asked. He replied, "I like the country in itself, but I do not like the enmity that has come between us, for I see no reason for it." "What you say is true," said she, "and I think the same, but I have come to see you in order to buy the ship which you two brothers own, because you have a larger vessel than I have and I want to go away from here." "I will give it up," said he, "if it is your pleasure," and with that they separated, she returning home and Finnbogi going back to bed. She climbed into bed and woke Thorvald up with her cold feet, so that he asked her why she was so cold and wet. She answered passionately, saying, "I have been to the brothers to ask them to sell me their ship as I wanted to buy a larger vessel, but they were so annoyed at it that they beat me and cruelly ill-treated me, and you, miserable man, will neither avenge my shame nor your own. I now realize that I am not in Greenland and I shall separate from you unless you avenge this." When he could no longer endure her reproaches he ordered his men to get up at once and take their weapons, and this done they went to the house of the brothers, entering it while they were asleep, took them and bound them, leading out each man as he was bound, and Freydís had each one killed as he came out. Thus all the men were put to death, leaving only the women, and these no one would kill. Then Freydís said, "Hand me an axe." This was done, and killing the five women there she left them dead.

After this crime they returned to their house, and it was quite clear that Freydís considered she had managed everything admirably. She addressed her men saying, "If we

succeed in getting back to Greenland I shall put to death any man who speaks about these events: we must say that when we came away we left them living here."

So early in the spring they made ready the ship, which the brothers had owned, loading it with all the good things they could obtain and the ship would carry. Then they put to sea, and after a good voyage arrived with their ship in Ericsfjord early in the summer. Karlsefni was there with a ship ready to put to sea waiting for a favourable wind, and it is said that a ship richer than that which he commanded never left Greenland.

Freydís now went to her home, as it had stood unharmed in the mean time. She bestowed many gifts on her companions, because she wished to keep her crimes secret, and settled down in her house. They were not all so discreet as to maintain silence about their crimes and wickedness that nothing should come out later. A rumour reached her brother, Leif, who thought the whole affair shameful, and he took three men of Freydís' following and tortured them till they told the whole story and their accounts agreed with one another. "I have no heart," said Leif, "to treat my sister Freydís as she deserves, but I prophesy of them that their descendants will never be worth much." It came to pass that from that time forward no one thought anything but ill of them.

Now we must return to that stage of the story at which Karlsfjord prepared his ship and sailed to sea. He had a good voyage, and arriving in Norway safe and sound spent the winter there selling his wares; both he and his wife were paid great honour by the foremost men in Nor-

way. The following spring he put his ship in order to sail to Iceland, and when he was quite ready, his ship lying at the quay waiting for a breeze, a southerner, a native of Bremen in Saxony, came up to him and made a bid for his "husa-snotra."<sup>3</sup> "I do not want to sell it," said Karlsefni. "I will give you half a mark of gold for it," said the southerner. Karlsefni thought this a good offer, and they clinched the bargain. The southerner went away with the "husa-snotra," Karlsefni not knowing what wood it was, but it was "mausurr"<sup>4</sup> come from Wineland.

Now Karlsefni sailed out to sea and sailed his ship along the north of the country into Skagafjord, where he laid up his ship for the winter. In the spring he bought Glaumbaejarland, building a house there, where he spent the rest of his life. He was a most distinguished man, and many men of noble lineage are descended from him and his wife Guðrið. After Karlsefni's death Guðrið, together with her son Snorri who was born in Wineland, took over the management of the home, and when Snorri married, Guðrið went abroad on her pilgrimage to Rome, afterwards returning to Snorri's house; by that time he had had a church built at Glaumbaejar. Later Guðrið took the veil, and living as an anchorite stayed there for the rest of her days. Snorri had a son named Thorgeirr who was the father of Ingeld, mother of Bishop Brand. Snorri Karlsefnison had a daughter named Hallfrið who was the mother of Runolf the father of Bishop Thorlak. There was a son of Karlsefni and Guðrið called Björn. He was fa-

<sup>3</sup> Lit. "house-neat," possibly the vane on the gable-end of a house.

<sup>4</sup> Possibly maple.

ther of Thorunn the mother of Bishop Björn. Many men are descended from Karlsefni and he was blessed in his descendants, and Karlsefni of all men has given the most circumstantial accounts of all these voyages of which something has now been told.



Scale of Miles

(Modern names in brackets)





## INTRODUCTION

A HUNDRED and forty-five years, from 1347 to 1492, elapsed between the last visit to America mentioned in Norse literature and the first voyage of Columbus. During this time it was, of course, possible for Scandinavians to obtain some information on the transatlantic countries from the Sagas, but the language barrier left the rest of Europe without general knowledge of the old discoveries. In one case, however, there is evidence that sailors from the south came into contact with the traditions, for a map printed at Venice in 1558 shows the Norse settlements in Greenland as well as an island that might be identified with Newfoundland.<sup>1</sup> This map was said by its publisher to be copied from the work of two Venetian nobles, the brothers Zeno, of the end of the fourteenth century, a date which is confirmed by the destruction of the Greenland colonies during the next generation. According to the story one of the Zeni had accompanied a lord of the Faroe Islands on an expedition to Greenland, which may well be true; the map, however, was probably derived from some Scandinavian prototype, being too detailed to

<sup>1</sup> But the explorer Davis, in a letter of 1586, takes its name, Estotiland, to be that of some district in or near Greenland.

have resulted from a single visit. The voyage is said to have been inspired by the reports of a fisherman who had been held captive in America by the natives, but his account of the country, at least as Zeno represents it, does not agree precisely with the facts. In any case there is no indication that Zeno's information became generally known, even in Venice, before 1558.

A possible connection between the Norse and the later discoveries lies in a solitary statement, attributed to Columbus by his son Ferdinand, that he had sailed in 1477 to Thule (Iceland or the Faroe Islands), and thus might have heard some rumour. Elsewhere Columbus himself does not claim to have penetrated farther north than England; hence the story may be a boastful invention. On the other hand he may have refrained from any other mention of his visit for fear that his indebtedness to local tradition might come to light and diminish his own repute. Either course of action would be in complete agreement with his character, but his choice of a southern route points to independence of Norse tradition.

Setting aside the suggestion of such influence, Columbus found sufficient encouragement for his venture in what he could learn in South Europe from books or by hearsay. Of his early life practically nothing is known; some evidence of his Genoese origin has been accumulated, though it continues to be disputed (recent theories have traced him to Catalonia, Corsica and even Armenia — under the name of Kholumbian), but the formative period of his life remains a blank. His marriage in Portugal, to the daughter of an Italian discoverer of Madeira, appears as the first

step towards the conception of his career. For, as Ferdinand Columbus says in the biography of his father, his mother-in-law, "perceiving what pleasure he took in hearing the accounts of these voyages, presented him with the writing and charts which had belonged to her husband; the perusal of these increased the zeal of the Admiral, and he undertook many inquiries concerning the navigation of the Portuguese to Elmina and the coast of Guinea, and took great interest in conversation with those who had frequented those parts. I have not been able to ascertain whether during this matrimonial connection he made any voyages to Elmina or to Guinea; be that, however, as it will, he began very naturally to reflect, while in Portugal, that as the Portuguese had sailed such a distance S., it was also possible to sail in a Westerly direction and find land in that quarter. In order to corroborate this opinion, he examined anew those geographical writers which he had studied at a former period and endeavoured to find what astronomical reasons would confirm the notion. He was careful to treasure whatever information relating to this matter he could collect from travellers or seamen. In this manner he came to a firm persuasion that to the West of the Canaries and Cape Verd there were islands which might be reached by sailing in that direction. But to understand more fully the reasons which led to this conclusion, and to satisfy the curiosity of many who are desirous of knowing distinctly the arguments and motives upon which the Admiral founded his great undertaking, I will relate what I have been able to find among his papers to this effect.

"The causes which induced the Admiral to conceive the

idea of discovering the Indies were three, namely — Reasons drawn from a consideration of the figure of the earth; the authority of writers; and the relations of seamen.

“ With respect to the first, he considered that as the land and water of which the earth is composed formed a sphere, it might be sailed round from East to West, till men came to stand feet to feet on the two opposite sides of the earth.

“ With regard to the second, he judged from creditable authors that the greater part of this sphere had been explored, and that there remained undiscovered only that portion comprised between the eastern extremity of India, known to Ptolemy and Marinus, and the Azores and Cape Verd Islands, which then were the farthest West of any known territory.

“ As to the third, he was of opinion that the space contained within these eastern known limits of India and the Cape Verd Islands was not above a third part of the circumference of the earth, inasmuch as the above-mentioned Marinus had travelled to the East a distance of fifteen twenty-fourths of this circumference, so that there remained but nine twenty-fourths from the East of India to the Cape Verd Islands.”

Furthermore he considered that the territories described in the Cosmography of Marinus, although extending the distance above specified, did not reach the extremity of the continent, and therefore the distance from that to the West of Europe must be still smaller. “ If this space were sea, he judged it might be sailed over in a short time; if it were land it might be discovered still sooner by going to

the West, as it must necessarily lie very near the Cape Verd Islands. These opinions were strengthened by what is stated in Strabo's fifth book of Geography, that no army has ever reached the eastern limit of India, which is a country as large, according to Ctesias, as all the rest of Asia, and agreeably to the assertion of Onesicritus is equal to a third part of the globe, and the like is affirmed by Pliny, *Lib. 6. Cap. 17.*, to which may be added the statement of Nearchus, that it is four months' journey in extent; from all which considerations he came to an opinion that its immense size must bring it near to Spain in the West.

"Another reason which induced him to believe that the distance from the West of Europe to India was small, was the opinion of Alfraganus and his followers, who assign a much smaller extent to the circumference of the earth than other writers, allowing but fifty-six miles and two-thirds to a degree, which diminishing the extent of the earth's surface, would also diminish the space of that third part between India and Europe which was unknown to Marinus. On this account he judged that whatever lands were discovered in the West must necessarily be a part of India, and for the same reason we may pronounce as unwarrantable the censures cast upon the Admiral by Rodrigo, Archdeacon of Seville and some of his party for bestowing the name of India upon these countries, which appellation they assert is not appropriate. Now the Admiral did not call them Indies as being the identical lands known by that name, but as being a part of that India beyond the Ganges which no geographer has set limits to by any other terri-

tory, but which has been regarded as extending to the ocean. These therefore being lands at the eastern limits of India, not designated by any particular name, it was judged most proper to bestow upon them that of the nearest country; they were thus called the West Indies, partly on account of the known riches of the country of India. In this manner he extended an invitation to the Catholic Kings who were doubtful of the enterprise, to aid him in discovering the Indies by the way of the West. . . .

“The Admiral was further incited to his undertaking, and supported in the opinion that the lands to the West were a part of India, by the authority of many learned men who affirmed that a passage might be made from the West of Africa and Spain, to the Eastern part of India by following a Westerly course, and that the ocean which separated these countries was not of great extent. This is averred by Aristotle, *Lib. 2. de Cœlo et Mundo*, where he states that one might pass from India to Cadiz in a few days. The same is confirmed by a remark of Averrhoes upon this passage. And Seneca, *Nat. Quæst., Lib. 1.*, regarding the learning of this world as nothing when compared to the knowledge which may be obtained in another life, observes that a ship may sail with a fair wind from the Western part of Spain to India in a few days. And if as some assure us, Seneca was the author of the tragedies which go by his name, we may be certain that he refers to this fact in the chorus to Medea.

*Venient annis  
Secula seris, quibus Oceanus  
Vincula rerum laxet, et ingens*

*Pateat tellus, Tiphisque novos  
Detegat orbis, nec sit Terris  
Ultima Thule*

‘ In the last days there will come an age in which Ocean shall loosen the bonds of things; a great country will be discovered; another Tiphis shall make known new worlds, and Thule shall no longer be the extremity of the earth.’ This prediction may assuredly be considered as accomplished in the person of the Admiral.

“ Strabo, in the first book of his Geography, says the Ocean encompasses the whole earth, that it washes India on the East, and on the West, Spain and Mauritania, and but for its vast extent, one might sail directly from the one of these countries to the other; the same he repeats in the second book.

“ Pliny, in his Natural History, *L. 2. Cap. 3.* states that the Ocean surrounds the earth, extending from India to Cadiz; the same in *Cap. 31. Lib. 6.*

“ Solinus, *Cap. 48.* says that from the *Gorgonean Islands*, by which we are to understand those of Cape Verd, there are forty days’ sail across the Atlantic Ocean to the *Isles of the Hesperides*; these the Admiral held for certain were the Indies.

“ Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville assert in their Travels into the East, that they went far beyond the countries described by Ptolemy and Marinus; and although these travellers do not speak of the Eastern Ocean, yet it may be inferred from their description of the Oriental territories, that India is not far distant from Africa and Spain.

“It is also affirmed by Petrus Heliacus, in his treatise *De imagine mundi*, Cap. 8. *De quantitate terræ habitabilis*, and by Julius Capitolinus, *De locis habitabilibus*, and in other treatises, that Spain is near to India in the West. This last author in the 19th chapter of his Geography has these words: ‘According to Pliny and the Philosophers, the ocean lying between Spain and western Africa on one side, and the extremity of India on the other, is not of great extent, and without doubt may be crossed with a favourable wind in a few days; the Eastern part of India therefore is not very distant from the West of Africa.’”

Another glimpse of the working of Columbus’ mind is given by a letter, written, according to his son, by the Florentine astronomer Toscanelli, though there seems at least an equal chance that Columbus himself had forged it as an additional means of winning support for his enterprise.

“TO DON CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, GREETING.

“I have become acquainted with the great and noble wish entertained by you, to visit the country of spices, on which account I send in answer to your letter, the copy of one directed by me, a few days since, to one of my friends, in the service of the King of Portugal before the wars of Castile; he having written to me, by order of his Highness, upon the same subject. I also send you a nautical chart, similar to one which I likewise presented to him; these may perhaps satisfy your inquiries. The copy of my letter is as follows.



“To Fernando Martinez, prebendary of Lisbon, greeting—I feel a great pleasure in hearing of the intimacy between you and the Most Serene and Magnificent King. Although I have spoken many times concerning the short passage by sea from hence to the Indies, where the spices are produced, which course, in my opinion, is shorter than that to Guinea, yet you inform me that his Highness wishes for some declaration or demonstration on my part, whereby he may more fully understand the matter. This I could do to his satisfaction, with the help of a terrestrial globe, instructing him how the parts of the earth are disposed. But for greater facility and precision, I have determined to mark down the route in question upon a marine chart, which I herewith send to his Majesty, drawn and painted by my hand. In this is represented the whole extremity of the W., from Ireland, S. to Guinea, with all the islands in the whole extent. Opposite, in the W. is the commencement of the Indies, with the isles and accessible parts, and the space between the North pole and the Equinoctial line. In this manner will be perceived the number of leagues necessary to proceed in order to reach those fertile countries which abound in spices and precious stones. Let it not create wonder that a westerly region is assigned for the country of spices, which have always been understood to grow in the E.; for those who sail W. will find those lands in the W., and those who travel E., will find the same places in the E. The straight lines, which run lengthwise upon the chart, show the distance from W. to E. The oblique ones, the distance from N. to S. I have also marked down many places among the Indies, which may

be reached by the occurrence of some casual event, such as contrary winds, or unlooked for accident of that sort. And in order that you may be made fully acquainted with whatever relates to this subject, I will give you the result of my investigations. The islands I have spoken of, are inhabited by merchants who carry on their trade among many nations; their ports contain a greater number of foreign vessels, than those of any other part of the world. The single port of *Zaiton*, which is one of the finest and most famous throughout the E., sends forth annually, more than a hundred ships laden with pepper, not to mention others, which return with cargoes of all sorts of spices. The whole territory is very extensive and populous, containing many provinces and kingdoms, under the dominion of a prince called *Great Can*, which signifies *King of Kings*. The common residence of this sovereign is in *Cathay*. His predecessors were desirous of an intercourse with the Christians, and two hundred years since, dispatched ambassadors to the Pope, requesting instructors to teach them our holy faith. These, however, were unable, from the obstacles they encountered upon their journey, to reach Rome, and were forced to return back. In the time of Pope Eugenius IV. there came an ambassador, who gave him assurances of the affection which was entertained for the Catholics by the princes and people of his country. I was a great deal in his company, and he gave me descriptions of the magnificence of his king, and of the immense rivers in that territory, which contained, as he stated, two hundred cities with marble bridges, upon the banks of a single stream. This is a noble country, and ought to be explored by us,

on account of its great riches, and the quantity of gold, silver, and precious stones, which might be obtained there. For their governors, they choose the wisest men, without regard to rank or riches. You will perceive by the map, that the distance from Lisbon, to the famous city of *Quisay*, is three thousand nine hundred miles, going exactly W. This city is thirty-five leagues in circuit, and its name signifies *City of Heaven*. Its situation is in the province of *Mango* near Cathay, and it contains ten large marble bridges built upon immense columns, of singular magnificence. From the island of *Anilla* to that of *Cipango*, is a distance of two hundred and twenty-five leagues. This island possesses such an abundance of precious stones and metals that the temples and royal palaces are covered with plates of gold.' ”

In the journal of his first voyage Columbus notes various stories of unknown lands in the Atlantic, and others are quoted by his son.

“Martin Vincent, Pilot of the King of Portugal, related, that four hundred and fifty leagues West of Cape St. Vincent, he had picked up a log, perfectly wrought, but not with iron, and which had been brought thither by a westerly wind, from this circumstance he concluded that there were indubitably, undiscovered islands in that quarter.

“Pedro Correa, brother-in-law of Columbus, informed him that he had seen near the island of Porto Santo, a fragment of wood similar to the former, and which came from the West . . . that in the same parts there had

been found canes of such bigness that a single joint would contain nine *garrafas* [four quarts] of wine. . . .

“The inhabitants of the Azores related to him that after a course of westerly winds, the sea coast upon the shores of those islands, and especially those of Graciosa, and Fayal, pine trees, which were not the growth of those parts, and that in the island of Flores, the bodies of two men had been washed ashore, who had very broad faces and looked quite unlike Christians. Near Cape Verga, he heard, they had once seen covered boats, filled with people of an uncommon description, who were believed to have been driven that way as they were going from one island to another.”

Antonio Leme, a resident in the island of Madeira, told the Admiral, that having sailed far to the West, he discovered three islands, but these he dismissed as rocks or floating islands, since the spot was within a hundred leagues of Madeira. He thought that St. Brandon's Isle was merely a floating island and that the same explanation held good for the stories quoted on p. 81 (if Ferdinand Columbus can be trusted on this point). One of those who endeavoured to find the island of Antilla, from the Azores, Pedro de Velasco, a native of Palos, related to him, “that on his return from sailing an hundred and fifty leagues toward the S.W., he discovered the island of Flores by following the flight of some birds, and that afterwards he sailed to the N.E. as far as the latitude of Cape Clear in Ireland, where he met with strong winds from the West with a smooth sea; this, he thought, could be explained only by supposing the existence of land in that direction,

which kept the sea from rising. It being late in the season, he did not venture to undertake the discovery of it. This happened above forty years before the discovery of the Indies.

“Another pilot informed him in the port of Santa Maria that upon a voyage to Ireland, he descried a country, which he took for a part of Tartary. It extended toward the W., but he could not reach it on account of the unfavourable state of the weather. This was probably the land now called *Bacalaos* (Newfoundland). Another Pedro de Velasco, a Galician, gave him the same account in the city of Murcia, saying that on his passage towards Ireland he discovered a country in the West, which he believed to be that which Fernan Dolmos attempted to reach.”

A contemporary tradition relates too that Columbus, when living on Porto Santo near Madeira, gave hospitality to some sailors who had been driven right across the Atlantic and returned in a dying condition; their pilot, Alonso of Huelva, gave him directions how to reach the new land. There would be no need to mention such an unsubstantiated and slanderous legend about a man with as many enemies as Columbus came to possess, were it not for other evidence that European ships were occasionally forced over to America. Thus the natives of Haiti, says Las Casas, declared that a few years before the establishment of the Spanish colony some bearded white men of similar appearance had put in there. Ferdinand Columbus reports the finding of the stern-timber of a European ship on the island of Guadeloupe in 1493. The

discovery of America could not have been long delayed, since traffic to the recently discovered islands — Azores, Madeira, Canaries and Cape Verds — drew ships farther west than ever before, vastly increasing the chances of such accidents.



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*NOTE to Journal of Columbus, abridged by Las Casas*

*Passages which Las Casas copied without altering the construction, so that Columbus speaks in the first person, have been marked off by an inverted comma.*

*Any explanatory words inserted by the translator have been enclosed within square brackets, to distinguish them from the similar additions to the text which are due to Las Casas.*

*Apart from the use of small initial letters for proper names, peculiarities in wording and spelling that occur in the translation of 1827 have only been altered if they evidently originated from careless writing or printing: the blame for inconsistencies in such respects can in no case be attached to the printers of 1930.*

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JOURNAL OF COLUMBUS, ABRIDGED  
BY LAS CASAS

**T**HIS is the first voyage and the routes and course taken by the Admiral Don Christopher Columbus when he discovered the Indies, put into a summary, except for the prologue addressed to the Sovereigns, which is copied word for word; beginning as follows:

‘IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.—

‘WHEREAS, Most Christian, High, Excellent and Powerful Princes, King and Queen of Spain and of the Islands of the Sea, our Lords, this present year 1492, after your Highnesses had terminated the war with the Moors reigning in Europe, and had brought it to an end in the great city of Granada, where on the second day of January, this present year, I saw the royal banners of your Highnesses planted by force of arms upon the towers of the Alhambra, which is the fortress of that city, and saw the Moorish king come out at the gate of the city and kiss the hands of your Highnesses, and of the Prince my Lord; and immediately in the same month, in consequence of the information which I had given your Highnesses respecting the countries of India and of a Prince, called Great Can, which in our language signifies King of Kings, how, at many times, he and his predecessors had sent to Rome soliciting instructors who might teach him our holy faith, and the holy Father had never granted his request, whereby great numbers of people were lost, believing in

idolatry and doctrines of perdition.<sup>1</sup> Your Highnesses, as Catholic Christians, and princes who love and promote the holy Christian faith, and are enemies of the doctrine of Mahomet, and of all idolatry and heresy, determined to send me, Christopher Columbus, to the said parts of India, to see the said princes, people, and territories, and to learn the disposition of the land and all else, and the proper method of converting them to our holy faith; and furthermore directed that I should not proceed by land to the East, as is customary, but by a Westerly route, in which direction we have hitherto no certain evidence that any one has gone. So after having expelled the Jews from your kingdoms and lordships, your Highnesses, in the same month of January,<sup>2</sup> ordered me to proceed with a sufficient armament to the said regions of India, and for that purpose granted me great favours, and ennobled me that thenceforth I might call myself Don, and be High Admiral of the Ocean Sea, and perpetual Viceroy and Governor of all the islands and continents which I might discover and acquire, or which may hereafter be discovered and acquired in the ocean; and that this dignity should be inherited by my eldest son, and thus descend from generation to generation forever.

‘Hereupon I left the city of Granada, on Saturday, the twelfth day of May, 1492, and proceeded to Palos, a sea-

<sup>1</sup> Papal missions had actually reached the Mongol Khans, more than two centuries before, but did not effect their conversion. Columbus was in ignorance, also, of the fall of the Khans in 1368, when China (which he calls India) came again under the rule of native emperors, of the Ming family.

<sup>2</sup> The decree was not promulgated till the end of March.

port, where I equipped three vessels, very fit for such an enterprise, and having provided myself with abundance of stores and seamen, I set sail from the port, on Friday, the third of August, half an hour before sunrise, and steered for the Canary Islands of your Highnesses, which are in the said ocean, thence to take my departure and proceed till I arrived at the Indies, and perform the embassy of your Highnesses to the Princes there, and discharge the orders given me. For this purpose I determined to keep an account of the voyage, and to write down punctually every thing we performed or saw from day to day, as will hereafter appear. Moreover, Sovereign Princes, besides describing every night the occurrences of the day, and every day those of the preceding night, I intend to draw up a new navigating chart, which shall contain the several parts of the ocean and land in their proper situations with their bearings; and also to compose a book, and represent the whole by picture with latitudes from the equator and west longitudes, and in all I shall accomplish so much that I must abstain from sleep and work constantly at navigation, which things will demand much labour.<sup>3</sup>

Friday, Aug. 3d, 1492. Set sail from the bar of Saltes<sup>3</sup> at 8 o'clock, and proceeded with a strong breeze till sunset, sixty miles<sup>4</sup> or fifteen leagues S. afterwards S.W. and S. by W. which was the direction of the Canaries.

Saturday, Aug. 4th. Steered S.W. by S.

Sunday, Aug. 5th. Sailed day and night more than forty leagues.

<sup>3</sup> Harbour of Palos, a little north of Cadiz and near the town of Huelva.

<sup>4</sup> Italian miles, four to the league.

Monday, Aug. 6th. The rudder of the caravel<sup>5</sup> Pinta (Martin Alonso Pinzon commander) became loose, being broken or unshipped. It was believed that this happened by the contrivance of Gomez Rascon and Christopher Quintero, owners of the caravel, because they disliked going on that voyage. The Admiral says he had found them in an unfavourable disposition before setting out. He was in much anxiety at not being able to afford any assistance to the said caravel without danger, but says that it somewhat quieted his apprehensions to know that Martin Alonso Pinzon was a man of courage and capacity. Made a progress, day and night, of twenty-nine leagues.

Tuesday, Aug. 7th. The Pinta's rudder again broke loose; secured it, and made for the island of Lanzarote, one of the Canaries. Sailed, day and night, twenty-five leagues.

Wednesday, Aug. 8th. There were divers opinions among the pilots of the three vessels, as to their true situation, and it was found that the Admiral was the most correct. His object was to reach the island of Grand Canary, and leave there the Pinta, she being leaky, besides having her rudder out of order, and take another vessel there, if any one could be had. They were unable to reach the island that day.

Thursday, Aug. 9th. The Admiral did not succeed in reaching the island of Gomera till Sunday night. Martin Alonso remained at Grand Canary by command of the Admiral, he being unable to navigate his vessel. The Ad-

<sup>5</sup> A *caravel* was a long, single decked vessel, with three masts and lateen sails. The Admiral's ship was square-rigged.

miral afterwards took the *Pinta* to Grand Canary, and there she was completely repaired, through the great labour and care of the Admiral, Martin Alonso and the others; finally they sailed to Gomera. They saw a great eruption of flames from the Peak of Teneriffe; which is a most lofty mountain. The *Pinta* which before had carried lateen sails, they altered and made square-rigged. Returned to Gomera, Sunday, Sept. 2d, with the *Pinta* repaired.

The Admiral says, that he was assured on oath by many respectable Spaniards, inhabitants of the island of Ferro, who were at Gomera with Doña Inez Peraza (mother of Guillen Peraza, afterwards first Count of Gomera) that every year they saw land to the west of the Canaries; and others of Gomera affirmed the same on oath. The Admiral here says that he remembers, while he was in Portugal, in 1484, there came a person to the King from the island of Madeira, soliciting for a vessel to go in quest of this land, which he affirmed he saw every year, and always of the same appearance. He also says that he remembers the same was said by the inhabitants of the Azores and described as in a similar direction, and of the same appearance and size.<sup>6</sup> Having taken in wood, water, meat, and other things,

<sup>6</sup> A meteoric appearance observed to the west of the Canaries occasioned the inhabitants of those islands to imagine they saw a country in that direction; it bore the name of the isle of *Brandon* or *Borondon*, and was laid down in all the early maps. Saint Brandon or Brandam, was a Benedictine monk of the sixth century, and according to the legend concerning him was, with his companions, seven years in pursuit of a western paradisiac isle called *Ima*. The inhabitants, also, of Madeira and the Azores, deceived by an appearance similar to the above, entertained the belief that land existed to the west of them. This belief was current from the middle of the fifteenth century, and many expeditions were undertaken for the discovery of these

which had been obtained by the men which he left ashore on departing for Grand Canary to repair the *Pinta*, the Admiral took his final departure from Gomera with the three caravels on Thursday, Sept. 6th.

Thursday, Sept. 6th. Set sail from the harbour of Gomera this morning and shaped his course for the voyage. The Admiral learnt by a vessel from the island of Ferro, that there were three Portuguese caravels cruising about there in search of him. (This must have been due to the anger of the King of Portugal, that the Admiral had left him to resort to Castile.) It was calm the whole day and night; in the morning they<sup>7</sup> found themselves between Gomera and Teneriffe.

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countries, some of them by the orders of the king of Portugal. Although they met with no success, the popular imagination of the existence of these territories still continued.

Another island by the name of *Antilla* was laid down in their maps by the Portuguese, westward of Madeira; they give the following account of it. In the year 714 when the Moors conquered Spain, seven bishops accompanied by a number of people sailed to the West, and discovered an island, where they landed and burnt their ships, lest any of the people should abandon them. They built seven cities and remained there. Several Portuguese ships afterwards sailed thither and never returned home. In the time of the Infant Don Henry, a ship arrived at this island, where the crew went on shore, and the islanders straightway carried them to their church, in order to ascertain whether they were Catholics, of which fact having satisfied themselves, they entreated them to remain a few days for their sovereign, who would rejoice to see them. But those of the ship fearing that the inhabitants would burn her, embarked in all haste and returned to Portugal. The sand which they found upon the shore of the island was a third part gold.

<sup>7</sup> Columbus always wrote "I" where a modern explorer would use "we"; Las Casas uses the plural in the first few pages but otherwise follows the manuscript, writing "he found himself" in the present instance. Kettell's version of 1827 habitually has the plural, and his practice has normally been retained in the present edition.

Friday, Sept. 7th. Calm all Friday, and till three o'clock P.M. on Saturday.

Saturday, Sept. 8th. At three in the afternoon the wind rose from the N.E. Steered their course W.; encountered a strong head sea, which impeded their progress. Sailed, day and night, nine leagues.

Sunday, Sept. 9th. Sailed this day nineteen leagues, and agreed to count less than the true number, that the crew might not be dismayed if the voyage should prove long. In the night sailed one hundred and twenty miles, at the rate of ten miles an hour, which make thirty leagues. The sailors steered badly, causing the vessels to fall to leeward toward the Northeast, sometimes as much as half a point, for which the Admiral reprimanded them repeatedly.

Monday, Sept. 10th. This day and night sailed sixty leagues, at the rate of ten miles an hour, which are two leagues and a half. Reckoned only forty-eight leagues, that the men might not be terrified if they should be long upon the voyage.

Tuesday, Sept. 11th. Steered their course W. and sailed above twenty leagues; saw a large fragment of the mast of a vessel of a hundred and twenty tons, but could not pick it up. In the night sailed about twenty leagues, and reckoned only sixteen, for the cause above stated.

Wednesday, Sept. 12th. This day steering their course, sailed day and night thirty-three leagues, and reckoned less, for the same cause.

Thursday, Sept. 13th. This day and night sailed on their course which was W., making thirty-three leagues, and reckoned three or four less. The currents were against

them. At the beginning of the evening this day, the needles varied to the N.W. and the next morning about as much in the same direction.

Friday, Sept. 14th. Steered this day and night on their course W., making twenty leagues; reckoned somewhat less. The crew of the Niña stated that they had seen a *grajao*,<sup>8</sup> and a tropic bird,<sup>9</sup> which birds never go farther than twenty-five leagues from the land.

Saturday, Sept. 15th. Sailed day and night on their course W., making twenty-seven leagues and more. In the beginning of the night saw a remarkable bolt of fire fall into the sea at the distance of four or five leagues.

Sunday, Sept. 16th. Sailed day and night on their course W., making thirty-nine leagues, and reckoned only thirty-six. Some clouds arose and it drizzled. The Admiral here says that from this day onwards they experienced very temperate breezes, and that the mornings were most delightful, wanting nothing but the melody of the nightingales. He says the weather was already like that of Andalusia in April. Here they began to meet with large patches of weeds very green, and which appeared to have been recently washed away from the land; on which account they all judged themselves to be near some island, though not a continent, according to the opinion of the Admiral, who says, 'for I believe the mainland lies farther on.'

Monday, Sept. 17th. Steered their course W. and sailed,

<sup>8</sup> The word means either a-jay or a jackdaw, but neither of these is an aquatic bird; Ferdinand Columbus describes the "bird similar to a *grajao*," caught on September 20th, as black with a white tuft on the head and webbed feet.

<sup>9</sup> Or boatswain-bird.



day and night, above fifty leagues; wrote down only forty-seven; the current favoured them. They saw a great deal of very small weed which was rock-weed, it came from the W. and they met with it very frequently. They were of opinion that land was near. The pilots took the sun's amplitude, and found that the needles varied to the N.W. a whole point of the compass; the seamen were terrified, and dismayed without saying why. The Admiral discovered the cause, and ordered them to take the amplitude again the next morning, when they found that the needles were true; the cause was, that the star moved from its place, while the needles remained stationary.<sup>10</sup> At dawn on that Monday they saw many more weeds, apparently river weeds, and among them a live crab, which the Admiral kept, and he says that these are sure signs of land, being never found eighty leagues out at sea. They found the sea-water less salt since they left the Canaries, and the breezes ever softer. They were all very cheerful, and strove which vessel should out-sail the others, and be the first to discover land; they saw many tunnies, and the crew of the *Niña* killed one. The Admiral here says that these signs were from the west, 'where I hope that high God in whose hand is all victory will speedily direct us to land.' This morning he says he saw a white bird called a tropic bird, which does not sleep at sea.

Tuesday, Sept. 18th. Sailed day and night more than fifty-five leagues; wrote down only forty-eight. All these days the sea was very smooth, like the river at Seville.

<sup>10</sup> Neither the easterly nor the westerly variation of the compass had yet been noticed.

This day Martin Alonso in the Pinta which was a swift sailer, ran ahead of the other vessels, he having informed the Admiral that he had seen great flocks of birds towards the W. and that he expected that night to reach land; for this reason he kept on ahead of the others. A great cloud appeared in the north, which is a sign of being near the land.

Wednesday, Sept. 19th. Continued on his course, and sailed, day and night, twenty-five leagues, experiencing a calm. Wrote down twenty-two. This day at ten o'clock a gannet<sup>11</sup> came on board, and in the evening another; these birds are not accustomed to go twenty leagues from land. It drizzled without wind, which is a sure sign of land. The Admiral was unwilling to remain here, beating about in search of land, but he held it for certain that there were islands to the North and South (which in fact was the case and he was sailing in the midst of them). His wish was to 'proceed on to the Indies, having such fair weather, for if it please God,' as the Admiral says, 'we shall examine these parts upon our return.' Here the pilots found their places upon the chart: the reckoning of the Niña made her four hundred and forty leagues distant from the Canaries, that of the Pinta four hundred and twenty, that of the Admiral four hundred.

Thursday, Sept. 20th. Steered W. by N. or N.W. varying with alternate changes of the wind and calms; made

<sup>11</sup> Literally "pelican," but some marine member of the family must be meant. An engraving of the bird occurs on Pl. 3 of Thomas Astley's *Collection of Voyages and Travels*, vol. I, London, 1745. Hakluyt (on voyage of Sir John Hawkins in 1564) translates the word as "gannet."

seven or eight leagues progress. Two gannets came on board, and afterwards another, — a sign of the neighbourhood of land. Saw large quantities of weeds today, though none was observed yesterday. Caught by hand a bird similar to a *grajao*; it was a river and not a marine bird, with feet like those of a gull. Towards dawn two or three land birds came to the ship, singing; they disappeared before sunrise. Afterwards saw a gannet coming from W.N.W. and flying to the S.W.; an evidence of land to the W.N.W., as these birds sleep on shore, and go to sea in the morning in search of food, never proceeding twenty leagues from the land.

Friday, Sept. 21st. Most of the day calm, afterwards a little wind. Steered their course day and night, sailing less than thirteen leagues. In the morning found such abundance of weeds that the ocean seemed to be covered with them; they came from the west. Saw a gannet; the sea smooth as a river, and the finest air in the world. Saw a whale, an indication of land, as they always keep near the coast.

Saturday, Sept. 22d. Steered more or less W.N.W., falling off their course to either hand, and making thirty leagues progress. Saw few weeds. Some sandpipers were seen, and another bird. The Admiral here says, 'this head wind was very necessary to me, for my crew had grown much alarmed, dreading that they never should meet in these seas with a fair wind to return to Spain.' Part of the day saw no weeds, afterwards it was very thick.

Sunday, Sept. 23d. Sailed N.W., and at times N.W. by N. and at times on their true course, which was W., and

made nearly twenty-two leagues. Saw a turtle dove, a gannet, another river bird, and other white fowl; — weeds in abundance with crabs among them. The sea being smooth and tranquil, the sailors murmured, saying, that they had got into smooth water, where it would never blow to carry them back to Spain; but afterwards the sea rose high without wind, which astonished them, so that the Admiral says here, ‘thus the rising of the sea was very necessary to me; it had not happened formerly except at the time of the Jews, when they went forth from Egypt, and murmured against Moses, who delivered them from captivity.’

Monday, Sept. 24th. Continued their course W. and sailed day and night fourteen leagues and a half; reckoned twelve; a gannet came to the ship, and they saw many sandpipers.

Tuesday, Sept. 25th. This day began very calm; afterwards the wind rose. Continued their course W. till night. The Admiral held a conversation with Martin Alonso Pinzon, captain of the other caravel Pinta, respecting a chart which the Admiral had sent on board three days before, in which it appears he had certain islands marked down in that sea; Martin Alonso was of opinion that they were in their neighbourhood, and the Admiral replied that he thought the same, but as they had not met with them, it must have been owing to the currents which had carried them to the N.E. and that they had not made such progress as the pilots stated. The Admiral directed him to return the chart, and when it had been sent back on a rope, the Admiral began to mark their position upon it, with his pilot and sailors.

At sunset Martin Alonso went up on the poop of his ship and called out with great joy to the Admiral, claiming a reward because he saw land. The Admiral says, when he heard him declare this, he fell on his knees and returned thanks to God, and Martin Alonso with his crew repeated *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, as did the crew of the Admiral. All those on board the Niña ascended the rigging, and all declared that it was land. The Admiral also thought it was land, and about twenty-five leagues distant. They remained till night all repeating that it was land, and the Admiral ordered their course to be shifted from W. to S.W. where the land appeared to lie. They sailed that day four leagues and a half W. and in the night seventeen leagues S.W. in all twenty-one and a half: told the crew thirteen leagues, making it a point to keep them from knowing how far they had sailed; in this manner two reckonings were kept, the shorter one falsified, and the other being the true account. The sea was very smooth and many of the sailors went in it to bathe, saw many dories and other fish.

Wednesday, Sept. 26th. Continued their course W. till the afternoon, then S.W. until he discovered that what they had taken for land was nothing but clouds. Sailed, day and night, thirty-one leagues; reckoned to the crew twenty-four. The sea was like a river, the air soft and exceedingly mild.

Thursday, Sept. 27th. Continued their course W. and sailed, day and night, twenty-four leagues, reckoned to the crew twenty. Saw many dories, and killed one. Saw a tropic bird.

Friday, Sept. 28th. Continued their course West, and sailed, day and night with calms, fourteen leagues, reckoned thirteen; met with a few weeds; caught two dories, and the other vessels more.

Saturday, Sept. 29th. Continued their course W. and sailed twenty-four leagues; reckoned to the crew twenty-one. On account of calms made little progress this day. Saw a bird called a frigate-pelican which forces the gannets to disgorge what they have swallowed, and then devours it; this is its only way of providing food; it is a marine bird, but never alights at sea, nor goes twenty leagues from land; there are many of them in the Cape Verd islands. Afterwards there came two gannets. The air was soft and refreshing, and the Admiral says nothing was wanting but the singing of the nightingale; the sea smooth as a river. Three times they saw three gannets and a frigate-pelican. Many weeds appeared.

Sunday, Sept. 30th. Continued their course W. and sailed day and night in calms, fourteen leagues; reckoned eleven. Four tropic birds came to the ship, which is a very clear sign of land, for so many birds of one sort together, show that they are not straying about or lost. Twice, saw two gannets; many weeds. The stars called the Guards,<sup>12</sup> which at evening appeared in a westerly<sup>13</sup> direction, were seen in the N.E. the next morning, making no more progress in a night than three lines, or nine hours; this was

<sup>12</sup> The two brightest stars in *Ursa Minor* at the opposite end of the constellation to the Pole Star.

<sup>13</sup> Probably an error for *Northerly*, which is the statement in the Biography of Columbus, by his son, Don Fernando, who relates this circumstance.

the case every night, as says the Admiral. At night the needles varied a point towards the N.W., in the morning they were true to the star, by which it appears that the polar star moves, like the others, and the needles are always right.

Monday, Oct. 1st. Continued their course W. and sailed twenty-five leagues; reckoned to the crew twenty. Experienced a heavy shower. The pilot of the Admiral began to fear this morning that they were five hundred and seventy-eight leagues West of the island of Ferro. The short reckoning which the Admiral showed his crew, gave five hundred and eighty-four, but the true one which he kept to himself was seven hundred and seven leagues.

Tuesday, Oct. 2d. Continued their course W. day and night, making thirty-nine leagues; reckoned to the crew thirty; the sea ever smooth and favourable: 'many thanks be to God,' says the Admiral here: weeds came from the E. towards the W. the contrary to what they had before observed. Saw many fish and took one. A white bird, which appeared to be a gull, was seen.

Wednesday, Oct. 3d. Continued their accustomed course, and sailed forty-seven leagues; reckoned to the crew forty. Many sandpipers appeared, and great quantities of weed, some of it old, and some very fresh, which appeared to contain fruit. Saw no other birds. The Admiral believed they had passed the islands contained in his chart. Here the Admiral says that he was unwilling to stay beating up and down the week before, when they had so many signs of land, though he knew there were islands in that quarter, because his wish was to proceed onward to

the Indies, and to linger on the way he thought would be unwise.

Thursday, Oct. 4th. Continued their course W. Sailed day and night, sixty-three leagues, and reckoned to the crew forty-six. There came to the ship above forty sandpipers in a flock, with two gannets; a boy on board the caravel hit one of them with a stone. A frigate-pelican came to the ship, and a white bird like a gull.

Friday, October 5th. Continued their course and sailed eleven miles an hour; day and night, made fifty-seven leagues, the wind abating in the night; reckoned to the crew forty-five. Fine weather and the sea smooth — ‘many thanks to God,’ says the Admiral. The air soft and temperate; no weeds; many sandpipers were seen, and flying-fishes in great numbers came on board.

Saturday, Oct. 6th. Continued their course W. and sailed forty leagues day and night; reckoned to the crew thirty-three. This night Martin Alonso gave it as his opinion that they had better steer from W. to S.W. The Admiral thought that Martin Alonso did not say this to proceed onward to *Cipango*; <sup>14</sup> and the Admiral saw that if they

<sup>14</sup> The name given to Japan by Marco Polo, who did not visit that country but based his description of it upon the accounts of oriental travelers of the thirteenth century.

Martin Behaim or Behem, a German, who afterwards entered into the service of the King of Portugal, constructed at Nuremberg in 1492, a terrestrial globe. Southwest of the Azores is marked down the island of Antilia. Southwest of the Cape Verd islands, near the equator, the island of St. Brandon. Directly West from the Canaries, near the continent of India, is drawn a very large island with these notices, “*Cipangu*.” “*En esta isla crecen las Especias; Hay Syrenas en el mar.*” “*Se adoran los Idolos*” &c. &c. A vast number of isles large and small are scattered to the North, South,



made any mistake they could not touch land so soon, and that it was better to go at once to the continent, and then to the islands.

Sunday, Oct. 7th. Continued their course W. and sailed twelve miles an hour, for two hours, then eight miles an hour. Sailed till an hour after sunrise, twenty-three leagues; reckoned to the crew eighteen. At sunrise the caravel Niña, who kept ahead on account of her swiftness in sailing, while all the vessels were striving to out-sail one another, and gain the reward promised by the King and Queen by first discovering land — hoisted a flag at her mast head, and fired a *lombarda*,<sup>15</sup> as a signal that she had discovered land, for the Admiral had given orders to that effect. He had also ordered that the ships should keep in close company at sunrise and sunset, as the air was clearer and more favourable at those times for seeing at a distance. In the afternoon, seeing nothing of the land which the Niña had made signals for, and observing large flocks of birds coming from the N. and making for the S.W. whereby it was rendered probable that they were either going to land to pass the night, or abandoning the countries of the North, on account of the approaching winter, he determined to alter his course, knowing also that the Portuguese had discovered most of the islands they possessed by attending to the flight of birds. The Admiral accordingly shifted his course from W. to W.S.W. with

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and West of this spot, and these are presumably the islands to which Martin Alonso wished to sail. Columbus regards Cipango as practically part of the continent.

<sup>15</sup> A sort of cannon, first brought from Lombardy.

a resolution to continue two days in that direction. This was done about an hour after sunset. Sailed in the night nearly five leagues, and twenty-three in the day: in all twenty-eight.

Monday, Oct. 8th. Steered W.S.W. and sailed day and night eleven or twelve leagues; it seems that at times during the night they made fifteen miles an hour (if the handwriting is not deceptive). Found the sea like the river at Seville, 'thanks to God,' says the Admiral. The air soft as that of Seville in April, and so fragrant that it was delicious to breathe it. The weeds appeared very fresh. Many land birds, one of which they took, flying towards the S.W. also *grajaos*, ducks, and a gannet were seen.

Tuesday, Oct. 9th. Sailed S.W. five leagues, when the wind changed, and they stood W. by N. four leagues. Sailed, with eleven leagues by day and the night, twenty leagues and a half; reckoned to the crew seventeen. All night heard birds passing.

Wednesday, Oct. 10th. Steered W.S.W. and sailed at times ten miles an hour, at others twelve, and at others, seven; day and night made fifty-nine leagues progress; reckoned to the crew but forty-four. Here the men lost all patience, and complained of the length of the voyage, but the Admiral encouraged them in the best manner he could, representing the profits they were about to acquire, and adding that it was to no purpose to complain, since he had come to the Indies, and that so he must continue on till, with the help of our Lord, he found them.

Thursday, Oct. 11th. Steered W.S.W.; and encountered a heavier sea than they had met with before in the whole

voyage. Saw sandpipers and a green rush near the vessel. The crew of the caravel Pinta saw a cane and a log; they also picked up a stick which appeared to have been carved with an iron tool, a piece of cane, another plant which grows on land, and a board. The crew of the Niña saw other signs of land, and a stalk loaded with rose-hips. These signs made them all grow cheerful again. Sailed this day till sunset, twenty-seven leagues.

After sunset steered their original course W. and sailed twelve miles an hour till two hours after midnight, going ninety miles, which are twenty-two leagues and a half; and as the Pinta was the swiftest sailer, and kept ahead of the Admiral, she discovered land and made the signals which had been ordered. The land was first seen by a sailor called Rodrigo de Triana, although the Admiral at ten o'clock that evening standing on the quarter-deck saw a light, but so small a body that he could not affirm it to be land; calling to Pero Gutierrez, groom of the King's wardrobe, he told him he saw a light, and bid him look that way, which he did and saw it; he did the same to Rodrigo Sanchez of Segovia, whom the King and Queen had sent with the squadron as comptroller, but he was unable to see it from his situation. The Admiral again perceived it once or twice, appearing like the light of a wax candle moving up and down, which some few thought an indication of land. But the Admiral held it for certain that land was near; for which reason, after they had said the *Salve* which the seamen are accustomed to repeat and chant after their fashion, the Admiral asked and admonished them to keep a strict watch upon the forecastle and look

out diligently for land, and to him who should first discover it he promised a silken jacket, besides the reward which the King and Queen had offered, which was an annuity of ten thousand *maravedis*.<sup>16</sup> At two o'clock in the morning, the land was discovered, at two leagues distance; they took in sail and remained under the square-sail without peaks, lying to till day, which was Friday, when they found themselves near a small island, one of the Lucayos, called in the Indian language Guanahani.<sup>17</sup> Presently they descried people, naked, and the Admiral landed in the boat, which was armed, along with Martin Alonso Pinzon, and Vincent Yañez his brother, captain of the *Niña*. The Admiral bore the royal standard, and the two captains each a banner of the Green Cross, which all the ships had carried for an ensign; this contained an F and a Y,<sup>18</sup> one letter on each side of the cross, and a crown over each. Arrived on shore, they saw trees very green, many streams of water, and diverse sorts of fruits.<sup>19</sup> The Admiral called upon the two Captains, and the rest of those who jumped

<sup>16</sup> Equivalent to about £8, or \$40. The reward for the discovery was adjudged by the King and Queen to be justly due to Columbus, as he was the first who saw the light. The annuity of 10,000 *maravedis* (secured on the Seville shambles) was therefore punctually paid him through the rest of his life. It is however probable that the light was only one carried in a canoe, for the ship was still forty miles from land; it has also been suggested that Columbus invented the story to secure the reward.

<sup>17</sup> This island, named by Columbus *S. Salvador*, is best identified with Watling's Island, a member of the Bahama group.

<sup>18</sup> The initials of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella.

<sup>19</sup> "Having all given thanks to God, kneeling on the shore, and kissed the ground with tears of joy, for the great mercy received, the Admiral stood up, and called that island St. Saviour." *Paraphrase of the Journal by Ferdinand Columbus.*

ashore, as also to Rodrigo de Escovedo, notary of the fleet, and Rodrigo Sanchez, of Segovia, to bear faithful witness that he before all others took possession (as in fact he did) of that island for the King and Queen his sovereigns, making the requisite declarations, which are more at large set down there in writing. Numbers of the people of the island straightway collected together. Here follow the precise words of the Admiral, in his book of his first navigation and discovery of the Indies. ‘As I saw that they were very friendly to us, and perceived that they could be much more easily converted to our holy faith by gentle means than by force, I presented them with some red caps, and strings of glass beads to wear upon the neck, and many other trifles of small value, wherewith they were much delighted, and became wonderfully attached to us. Afterwards they came swimming to the boats where we were, bringing parrots, balls of cotton thread, javelins and many other things which they exchanged for articles we gave them, such as glass beads, and hawk’s bells; in fact they accepted anything and gave what they had with the utmost good will.<sup>20</sup> But they seemed on the whole to me, to be a very poor people. They all go as naked as their mothers bore them, even the women, though I saw but one girl. All the men whom I saw, were young, not above thirty years of age, well made, with very fine shapes and faces; their hair short, and coarse like that of a horse’s tail, combed over their eyebrows, except a few locks which they suffer to hang down behind, and never cut. Some paint

<sup>20</sup> The natives of the West Indies considered generosity to be one of the principle virtues.

themselves with black (and they are in colour like those of the Canaries, neither black nor white); others paint themselves with white, others with red, and others with such colours as they can find. Some paint the face, and some the whole body; others only the eyes, and others the nose. Weapons they have none, nor are acquainted with them, for I showed them swords which they grasped by the blades, and cut themselves through ignorance. They have no iron, their javelins being without it, and nothing more than sticks, though some have fish-bones or other things at the ends. They are all of a good size and stature, and handsomely formed. I saw some with scars of wounds upon their bodies, and demanded by signs the cause of them; they answered me in the same way, that there came people from the other islands in the neighbourhood who endeavoured to make prisoners of them, and they defended themselves. I thought then, and still believe, that these came here from the continent to take captives. It appears to me, that the people are ingenious, and would be good servants, for I saw that they very quickly grasped all that was said to them; and I am of opinion that they would very readily become Christians, as they appear to have no religion. If it please our Lord, I intend at my return to carry home six of them to your Highnesses, that they may learn our language. I saw no beasts of any kind in the island, except parrots.' These are the very words of the Admiral.

Saturday, Oct. 13th. 'At day-break great multitudes of men came to the shore, all young, as I have said, and of fine shapes, a very handsome race; their hair not curled but flowing and coarse like horse-hair, and all with fore-

heads and heads much broader than any people I had hitherto seen; their eyes were large and very beautiful; they were not black, but the colour of the inhabitants of the Canaries, which is a very natural circumstance, they being in the same latitude with the island of Ferro in the Canaries. They were straight-limbed without exception, and not with prominent bellies but handsomely shaped. They came to the ship in canoes, made of a single trunk of a tree, like a long boat, but all in one piece, wrought in a wonderful manner considering the country; some of them large enough to contain forty-five men, others of different sizes down to those fitted to hold but a single person.<sup>21</sup> They rowed with an oar like a baker's shovel, and wonderfully swift. If they happen to upset, they all jump into the sea, and swim till they have righted their canoe and emptied it with the calabashes they carry with them. They came loaded with balls of cotton, parrots, javelins, and other trifles too numerous to mention; these they exchanged for whatever we chose to give them. I was very attentive, and strove to learn if they had gold. Seeing some of them with little bits of this metal hanging from holes in their noses, I gathered from them by signs that by going southward or steering round the island in that direction, there would be found a king who possessed large vessels of gold, and great quantities of it. I endeavoured to procure them to lead the way thither, but found they were unacquainted with the route. I determined to stay

<sup>21</sup> The canoes were formed of tree-trunks, hollowed out by fire and by chopping with stone axes, bent to shape and supplied with combings. They were frequently used for journeys of a hundred and fifty miles or more.

here till the afternoon of the next day, and then sail for the S.W. for according to what I could learn from them, there was land at the S. as well as at the S.W. and N.W. and those from the N.W. came many times and fought with them and proceeded on to the S.W. in search of gold and precious stones. This is quite a large island and very level, with trees extremely green, and many streams of water; there is a very large lake in the middle of the island, but no mountains: the whole is completely covered with verdure and delightful to behold. The natives are an inoffensive people, and so desirous to possess any thing they saw with us, that they kept swimming off to the ships with whatever they could find, and readily bartered for any article we saw fit to give them in return, even such as broken platters and fragments of glasses. I saw in this manner sixteen balls of cotton thread which weighed above twenty-five pounds, given for three Portuguese *ceutis*, which equal one Castilian *blanca*.<sup>22</sup> This traffic I forbade, and suffered no one to take their cotton from them, unless I should order it to be procured for your Highnesses, if proper quantities could be met with. It grows in this island, though from my short stay here, I could not guarantee it fully; the gold, also, which they wear in their noses, is found here, but not to lose time, I am determined to proceed onward and ascertain whether I can reach Cipango. At night they all went on shore with their canoes.

Sunday, Oct. 14th. At dawn, I ordered the boats of every vessel to be got ready, and coasted along the island toward the N.N.E. to see the other side of it, the opposite

<sup>22</sup> One-twelfth of an American cent.



side to the east side where we lay, and also to see the villages. Presently we discovered two or three villages, and the people all came down to the shore, calling out to us, and giving thanks to God. Some brought us water, and others victuals: others seeing that I was not disposed to land, plunged into the sea and swam out to us, and we perceived that they interrogated us if we had come from heaven. An old man came on board my boat; the others, both men and women cried with loud voices — ‘Come and see the men who have come from heaven. Bring them victuals and drink.’ There came many of both sexes, every one bringing something, giving thanks to God, prostrating themselves on the earth, and lifting up their hands to heaven. They called out to us loudly to come to land, but I was apprehensive at seeing a large reef of rocks, which surrounds the whole island, although within there is depth of water and room sufficient for all the ships of Christendom, with a very narrow entrance. There are some shoals withinside, but the water is as smooth as in a well. It was to view these parts that I set out in the morning, for I wished to give a complete relation to your Highnesses, as also to find where a fort might be built. I discovered a tongue of land, containing six houses which appeared like an island though it was not, but might be cut through and made so in two days. I do not however see the necessity, as the people here are simple in warlike matters, as your Highnesses will see by those seven which I have ordered to be taken and carried to Spain in order to learn our language and return, unless your Highnesses should choose to have them all transported to Castile, or held captive in the

island. I could conquer the whole of them with fifty men, and govern them as I pleased. Near the islet I have mentioned were groves of trees, the most beautiful I have ever seen, with their foliage as verdant as we see in Castile in April and May. There were also many streams. After having taken a survey of these parts, I returned to the ship, and setting sail, discovered such a number of islands that I knew not which first to visit; the natives whom I had taken on board, informed me by signs that there were so many of them that they could not be numbered; they repeated the names of more than a hundred. Finally I looked out for the largest and I determined to steer for it, which must be five leagues from this of *San Salvador*; the others were some at a greater, and some at a less distance. They are all very level, without mountains, exceedingly fertile and all populated, the inhabitants living at war with one another, although a simple race, and with delicate bodies.

Monday, Oct. 15th. Stood off and on during the night, determining not to come to anchor till morning, fearing to meet with shoals; continued our course at dawn; and as the island was more than five leagues distant, nearer seven, and the tide was against us, it was noon when we arrived there. I found that part of it towards San Salvador extending from N. to S. five leagues, and the other side which we coasted along, ran from E. to W. more than ten leagues. From this island espying a still larger one to the W. I set sail in that direction and kept on till night before reaching the western extremity of the island, where I gave it the name of *Santa Maria de la Concepcion*.<sup>28</sup> About sun-

<sup>28</sup> Rum Cay.

set we anchored near the cape which terminates the island towards the W. to enquire for gold, for the natives we had taken from San Salvador told me that the people here wore huge golden bracelets upon their arms and legs. I believed pretty confidently that they had invented this story in order to find means to escape from us, still I determined to pass none of these islands without taking possession, so that when it is said of one of them, it applies to them all. We anchored and remained till today, Tuesday, when at daybreak I went ashore with the boats armed, and landed. The people, who were numerous, we found naked like those of San Salvador, and in the same conditions. They suffered us to traverse the island, and gave us what we asked of them. As the wind changed and blew S.E. upon the shore where the vessels lay, I determined not to remain, and set out for the ship. A large canoe being near the caravel *Niña*, one of the San Salvador natives on board leaped over and swam to her (another had made his escape in the middle of the previous night); the canoe being reached by the fugitive, the natives rowed for the land too swiftly to be overtaken by any boat, since it had a good start. When we too landed, they abandoned the canoe, and some of my men went ashore in pursuit of them, whereupon they all fled like fowls; the canoe which they had left was brought on board the *Niña*, where from another quarter had arrived a small canoe with a single man, who came to barter a skein of cotton; some of the sailors finding him unwilling to go on board the vessel, jumped into the sea and took him. I was upon the quarter deck of my ship, and seeing the whole, sent for him, and gave

him a red cap, put some small beads of green glass upon his arms, and two hawk's bells upon his ears. I then ordered his canoe (which the boat's crew had kept) to be returned to him, and despatched him back to land.

I now set sail for the other large island I saw to the W. and gave orders for the other canoe which the Niña had in tow to be set adrift. I had refused to receive the cotton from the native whom I sent on shore, although he pressed it upon me. I looked out after him and saw upon his landing that the others all ran to meet him with much wonder. It appeared to them that we were honest people, and that the man who had escaped from us had done us some injury, for which we kept him in custody. It was in order to favour this notion that I ordered the canoe to be set adrift, and gave the man the presents abovementioned, that when your Highnesses send another expedition to these parts it may meet with a friendly reception. All I gave the man was not worth four *maravedis*.<sup>24</sup> We set sail about ten o'clock, with the wind S.E. and stood southerly for the island I mentioned above, which is a very large one, and where according to the signs made to me by all the natives of San Salvador on board, there is much gold, the inhabitants wearing it in bracelets upon their arms and legs, as well as in their ears and noses, and round their necks. This island is nine leagues distant from Santa Maria in a westerly direction. This part of it extends from N.W. to S.E. and appears to be at least twenty-eight leagues long, very level, without any mountains, like San Salvador and Santa Maria, having a good beach and not rocky, except a few

<sup>24</sup> A total of less than an American cent.

ledges under water near the shore, which renders it necessary to keep your eyes open and anchor at some distance, although the water is very clear, and the bottom may be seen. At two shots of a *lombarda* from the land, the water is so deep that it cannot be sounded; this is the case in all these islands. They are all extremely verdant and fertile, with the air very mild, and probably contain many things of which I am ignorant, not inclining to stay here, but discover and visit other islands in search of gold. And considering that the natives declare by signs that it is worn upon the arms and legs, and that I have ascertained that they mean the true metal by showing them some pieces of it which I have with me, I cannot fail, with the help of our Lord to find the place which produces it.

Being at sea, about midway between Santa Maria and the large island, which I name *Fernandina*,<sup>25</sup> we met a man alone in a canoe going from Santa Maria to Fernandina; he had with him a piece of the bread which the natives make, as big as one's fist, a calabash of water, a quantity of reddish earth, pulverized and afterwards kneaded up,<sup>26</sup> and some dried leaves which are in high value among them,<sup>27</sup> for a quantity of it was brought to me at San Salvador; he had besides a little basket made after their fashion, containing some glass beads, and two *blancas* <sup>28</sup> by which I knew he had come from San Salvador, and had passed from thence to Santa Maria. He came to the ship and

<sup>25</sup> Now called Long Island.

<sup>26</sup> For body-paint.

<sup>27</sup> "As being of a sweet scent and wholesome," adds Ferdinand Columbus' abstract of the Journal. Perhaps tobacco is meant.

<sup>28</sup> Castilian coins.

I caused him to be taken on board, as he requested it; we took his canoe also on board and took care of his things. I ordered him to be presented with bread and treacle, and drink, and shall carry him to Fernandina and give him his property, that he may carry a good report of us, so that if it please our Lord when your Highnesses shall send again to these regions, those who arrive here may receive honour, and the natives may give them whatever they may be found to possess.

Tuesday, Oct. 16th. Set sail from Santa Maria about noon, for Fernandina, which appeared very large in the W.; sailed all the day with calms, and could not arrive soon enough to view the shore and select a good anchorage, for great care must be taken in this particular, lest the anchors be lost. Beat up and down all night, and in the morning arrived at a village and anchored. This was the place to which the man whom we had picked up at sea, had gone, when we set him on shore. He had given such a favourable account of us, that all night there was no lack of canoes coming off to us, who brought us water and what other things they had. I ordered each man to be presented with something, as strings of ten or a dozen glass beads, timbrels of brass, such as cost in Castile a *maravedi* apiece, and thongs of leather, all which they esteemed highly; those who came on board I directed should be fed with treacle. At three o'clock, I sent the boat on shore for water; the natives with great good will directed the men where to find it, themselves carried the casks full of it to the boat, and seemed to take great pleasure in serving us.

This is a very large island, and I have resolved to coast

it about, for as I understand, in, or near the island, there is a mine of gold. It is eight leagues W. of Santa Maria, and the cape where we have arrived and all this coast extends from N.N.W. to S.S.E. I saw twenty leagues of it, but not the end. Now, writing this, I set sail with a southerly wind to circumnavigate the island, and search till we can find *Samaot*, which is the island or city where the gold is, according to the account of those who come on board the ship, to which the relation of those of San Salvador and Santa Maria corresponds. These people are similar to those of the islands just mentioned, and have the same language and customs; with the exception that they appear somewhat more civilized, both in their manners and in showing themselves more subtle in their dealings with us, bartering their cotton and other articles with more profit than the others had experienced; here too we saw cotton cloth made into cloaks, and perceived the people more decent, the women wearing a slight covering of cotton over the privities. The island is verdant, level and fertile to a high degree; and I doubt not that grain is sowed and reaped the whole year round, as well as all other productions of the place. I saw many trees very dissimilar to those of our country, and many of them with branches of different sorts upon the same trunk; one branch is of one species and one of another and such is the diversity among them that it was the greatest wonder in the world to behold. Thus, for instance, one branch of a tree bore leaves like those of a cane, another branch of the same tree, leaves similar to those of the lentisk. In this manner a single tree bears five or six different kinds. Nor is this done by graft-

ing, for a graft is easily recognized as a piece of human workmanship, whereas these trees grow wild, and the natives take no care about them. They have no religion,<sup>29</sup> and I believe that they would very readily become Christians, as they have a good understanding. Here the fish are so dissimilar to ours that it is wonderful. Some are shaped like dories, of the finest hues in the world, blue, yellow, red, and every other colour, some variegated with a thousand different tints, and these colours are so beautiful that no one could fail to marvel and take great delight in beholding them. Here are also whales. For beasts, I saw no creatures on land save parrots and lizards, but a boy told me he saw a large snake. No sheep nor goats nor other cattle were seen, and although our stay here has been very short, it being now noon, yet were there any, I could hardly have failed of seeing them. The circumnavigation of the island I shall describe after I have been round it.

Wednesday, Oct. 17th. At noon set sail from the village where we had anchored and watered, to sail round the island of Fernandina; the wind S.W. and S. My intention was to follow the coast of the island to the S.E. (as it runs in the direction N.N.W. — S.S.E.), because all the Indians I have on board, besides others whom I met with, declare by signs that in this southerly direction lies the island which they call *Samoet*, where gold is found. Martin Alonso Pinzon, captain of the *Pinta*, on board of which I had sent three of the Indians, came to me and said that

<sup>29</sup> Actually they worshipped the powers of nature and kept images and other objects as domestic deities.



he had been assured by one of them, I might sail round the island much sooner by the N.N.W. Seeing that the wind would not enable me to proceed in the direction I first contemplated, and finding it favourable for the one thus recommended me, I steered to the N.N.W. and at two leagues distance from the extremity of the island, I discovered a very remarkable haven with a very narrow entrance — or one might say, two entrances, for there is an islet in the middle, the inside capacious enough for a hundred ships, if there were sufficient depth of water, within and at the entrance, and a clean bottom. I thought it advisable to examine it, and take soundings, therefore I anchored outside, and went in with all the boats of the fleet, but found the water shallow. As I had first imagined it to be the mouth of a river, I had directed the casks to be carried ashore for water, which being done we discovered some eight or ten men who straightway came up to us, and directed us to a village in the neighbourhood, I accordingly dispatched the crews thither in quest of water, part of them armed, and the rest with the casks, and the place being at some distance it detained me here a couple of hours. In the mean time I strayed about among the groves, which present the most enchanting sight ever witnessed, a degree of verdure prevailing like that of May in Andalusia, the trees as different from those of our country as day is from night, and the same may be said of the fruit, the plants, the stones and every thing else. A few of the trees, however, seemed to be of a species similar to some that are to be found in Castile, though still with a great dissimilarity, but the others so unlike, that it is impossible to find any

resemblance in them to those of our land. The natives we found like those already described, as to personal appearance and manners, and naked like the rest, and of the same height. Whatever they possessed, they bartered for what we chose to give them. I saw a boy of the crew purchasing javelins of them with bits of platters and broken glass. Those who went for water informed me that they had entered their houses and found them very clean and neat, with beds <sup>30</sup> and receptacles of cotton nets. Their houses are all built after the manner of booths, with very high, fine chimneys;<sup>31</sup> none of the villages which I saw, contained more than twelve or fifteen of them. Here it was remarked that the married women wore cotton breeches, but the younger females were without them, except a few who were as old as eighteen years. Dogs were seen of a large and a small breed, and one of the men had hanging at his nose a piece of gold half as big as a *castellano*,<sup>32</sup> with letters upon it. I endeavoured to purchase it of them in order to ascertain what currency it was <sup>33</sup> but they refused to part with it. Having taken our water on board, I set sail and proceeded N.W. till I had surveyed the coast to the point where it begins to run from E. to W. Here the Indians gave me to understand that this island was smaller than that of Samoet, and that I had better return in order

<sup>30</sup> Hammocks: the word *hamaca* was adopted by the Spaniards from the Indians.

<sup>31</sup> These "chimneys" were not intended for the passage of smoke but were merely the decorative spires of the straw huts.

<sup>32</sup> A small gold coin.

<sup>33</sup> No coins were used by the natives of America; either Columbus made a mistake, or the object had been found in the wreck of some European ship.

to reach it the sooner. The wind died away, and then sprang up from the W.N.W. which was contrary to the course we were pursuing, we therefore hove about and steered E.S.E. throughout last night (on courses varying from due E. to S.), in order to stand off from the land, the weather being very cloudy and thick. It rained violently from midnight till near day, and the sky still remains clouded; we remain off the southeast part of the island, where I hope to anchor and stay till the weather grows clear, when I shall steer for the other islands I am in quest of. Every day that I have been in these Indies it has rained more or less. I assure your Highnesses that these lands are the best, most fertile, temperate, level and beautiful countries in the world.

Thursday, Oct. 18th. As soon as the sky grew clear, I sailed before the wind and went as far round the island as I could, anchoring when it became too late to proceed; I did not, however, land. At dawn set sail again.

Friday, Oct. 19th. At dawn I got up the anchors, and I sent the *Pinta* to steer E. and S.E. and the *Niña*, S.S.E., proceeding myself to the S.E.; the caravels I directed to keep on the courses prescribed till noon, and then to rejoin me. Within three hours we descried an island to the E. toward which we directed our course, and arrived all three, before noon, at the northern extremity, where there is an islet and a reef of rock off it toward the North, with another islet between this one and the main island. The Indians from San Salvador on board the ships called this last *Saomete*; I named it *Isabela*.<sup>84</sup> The wind was N.; it lies

<sup>84</sup> Crooked Island, and, it would appear, Acklin's Island.

easterly from the island of Fernandina, from which I had come and the coast extends from the islet twelve leagues, west, to a cape which I called *Cabo Hermoso* (Fair Cape), it being a beautiful, round headland with a bold shore free from shoals. Part of the shore is rocky, but the rest of it, like most of the coast here, a sandy beach. Here I anchored on this (Friday) night, till morning. The whole of this shore, and all I have seen of the island, is practically flat, and this island is the most beautiful thing that I have ever seen, for while the others are very beautiful, this is more so; it has trees in great number, flourishing and lofty; the land is higher than the other islands discovered, and contains an eminence, which though it cannot be called a mountain, yet adds a beauty to its appearance, and gives an indication of streams of water in the interior. From this part toward the northeast is an extensive bay, with many large and thick groves. I wished to anchor there, and land, that I might examine those delightful regions, but found the water shallow, without a possibility of casting anchor except at a distance from the shore. The wind being favourable, I came to the Cape, which I named Hermoso, where I am now anchored. Thus I did not anchor in that bay, and since I see this cape is so green and beautiful, like all the other objects and lands of these islands, I know not in which course to proceed first; my eyes are never tired with viewing such delightful verdure, and of a species so new and dissimilar to that of our country, and I have no doubt there are trees and herbs here which would be of great value in Spain, as dyeing materials, medicine, spicery, &c. but I do not know them, which causes me much sorrow.

Upon arrival at this cape I experienced such a soft and delightful odour from the flowers or trees of the island that it was the sweetest thing in the world. Tomorrow morning before we depart, I intend to land and see what can be found in the neighbourhood. Here is no village, but farther within the island is one, where our Indians inform us we shall find the king, and that he has much gold. Tomorrow I shall penetrate so far as to reach the village and see or speak with the king, who, as they tell us, governs all these islands, and goes dressed, with a great deal of gold about him. I do not, however, give much credit to these accounts, as I understand the natives but imperfectly, and perceive them to be so poor that any trifling quantity of gold which this king wears, would appear to them a great amount. This cape which I have called Hermoso appears to me to be a separate island from that of Saometo, and I even think there is another small one between them. I am not solicitous to examine particularly every thing here, which indeed could not be done in fifty years, because my desire is to make all possible discoveries, and return to your Highnesses, if it please our Lord, in April. But in truth, should I meet with gold or spices in great quantity, I shall remain till I collect as much as possible, and for this purpose I am proceeding solely in quest of them.

Saturday, Oct. 20th. At sunrise weighed anchor, lying at the S.W. cape of this island of Saometo (which I named Isabela, and the cape where we anchored, *Cabo de la Laguna*) intending to sail to the N.E. and E. by means of the S.E. and S. side, in which direction I expected from the

account of our Indians, to find 'the town, and king of the island. I found the coast very shallow, and offering every obstacle to our navigation, and perceiving that our course this way must be very circuitous, I determined to return to the westward, by the course I had come, N.N.E., and sail round this island to — [*word missing*]. The wind was so slight that I could not come close along the shore before night; and as it is very dangerous anchoring here except by daylight, when it is possible to see where to let go the anchor, since the ground is all patches, some clean and some not, I stood off and on all night. The caravels came to anchor, having reached the shore in season, and they expected me to stand in and anchor with the help of the signals which they made, according to our custom; but I determined to remain at sea.

Sunday, Oct. 21st. At 10 o'clock, we arrived at a cape of the island, and anchored, the other vessels in company. After having dispatched a meal, I went ashore, and found no habitation save a single house, and that without an occupant; we had no doubt that the people had fled in terror at our approach, as the house was completely furnished. I suffered nothing to be touched, and went with my captains and some of the crew to view the country. This island even exceeds the others in beauty and fertility. Groves of lofty and flourishing trees are abundant, as also large lakes, surrounded and overhung by the foliage, in a most enchanting manner. Every tree and plant looked as green as in April in Andalusia. The melody of the birds was so exquisite that one was never willing to part from the spot, and the flocks of parrots obscured the heavens. The birds,

both large and small, are of so many sorts and so different from ours, that it is a wonder; there are also a thousand different sorts of trees, each with their fruit, and of a wonderfully delicious odour. It was a great affliction to me to be ignorant of their natures, for I am very certain they are all valuable; specimens of them and of the plants I have preserved. Going round one of these lakes, I saw a serpent,<sup>35</sup> which we killed, and I have kept the skin for your Highnesses; upon being discovered he took to the water, whither we followed him, as it was not deep, and dispatched him with our lances; he was seven palms in length; I think there are many more such in the lagoon. I discovered also the aloe tree, and am determined to take on board the ship tomorrow, ten quintals of it, as I am told it is valuable. While we were in search of some good water, we came upon a village of the natives about half a league from the place where the ships lay; the inhabitants on discovering us abandoned their houses, and took to flight, carrying off their goods to the mountains. I ordered that nothing which they had left should be taken, not even the value of a pin. Presently we saw several of the natives advancing towards our party, and one of them came up to us, to whom we gave some little bells and glass beads, with which he was delighted. I asked him in return, for water, to increase our friendship and after I had gone on board the ship, the natives came down to the shore with their calabashes full, and showed great pleasure in presenting us with it. I ordered another string of glass beads to be given them, and they promised to return the next

<sup>35</sup> Iguana.

day. It is my wish to fill all the water casks of the ships at this place, which being executed, I shall depart immediately, if the weather serve, and sail round the island, till I succeed in meeting with the king, in order to see if I can acquire any of the gold, which I hear he possesses. Afterwards I shall set sail for another very large island which I believe to be Cipango, according to the indications I receive from the Indians on board. They call the island *Colba*,<sup>36</sup> and say there are many large ships, and sailors there. Beyond this island lies another which they name *Bosio*,<sup>37</sup> and they inform me that it too is very large; the others which lie in our course, I shall examine on the passage, and according as I find gold or spices in abundance, I shall determine what to do; at all events I am determined to proceed on to the continent, and visit the city of Guisay<sup>38</sup> where I shall deliver the letters of your Highnesses to the Great Can, and demand an answer, with which I shall return.

Monday, Oct. 22d. Through the night, and today we remained waiting here to see if the king, or any others would bring us gold or any thing valuable. Many of the natives visited us, resembling those of the other islands, naked like them, and equally painted, some white, some red, some black and some in other colours; they brought javelins and clews of cotton to barter, which they ex-

<sup>36</sup> Elsewhere called *Cuba*.

<sup>37</sup> Haiti, or Española as he subsequently named it.

<sup>38</sup> *Guisay*, *Quisay* or *Kinsai*, the modern Hangchow, had been the residence of the Great Khan, as was known from Marco Polo, and other writers of the early ages, who give the most splendid accounts of this great capital of the East.



changed with the sailors for bits of glass, broken cups, and fragments of earthen ware. Some of them wore pieces of gold fastened in their noses; they readily gave them away for the bell of a hawk's foot and some glass beads; the amount collected in this manner, however, was very inconsiderable. Any small matter they received from us, they held in high estimation, believing us to have come from heaven. We took in water for the ships from a lake in the neighbourhood of this cape, which I have named *Cabo del Isleo*: in this lake Martin Alonso Pinzon, captain of the Pinta, killed a serpent similar to that of yesterday, seven palms long. I ordered as much of the aloe to be collected as could be found.

Tuesday, Oct. 23d. It is now my determination to depart for the island of Cuba, which I believe to be Cipango, from the indications these people give of its size and wealth.<sup>39</sup> I did not delay any further here, nor <sup>40</sup> . . . round this island to reach the village and have speech with this King or Lord, as it would be a great waste of time; for I perceive there are no gold mines to be found. Moreover it would be necessary to steer many courses in making the circuit, and it does not always blow as we should like. And as we are going to places where there is great commerce, I judge it expedient not to linger on the way, but to proceed and survey the lands we meet with, till we arrive at that most profitable for our enterprise. It is my opinion that we shall find much profit there in spices; but my want of knowledge in these articles occasions me the greatest

<sup>39</sup> The wealth of Japan was reputed to be fabulous.

<sup>40</sup> Omission of "sail" ?

pain in the world, inasmuch as I see a thousand sorts of trees, each with its own species of fruit, and as flourishing at the present time, as the trees in Spain during the months of May and June; likewise a thousand kinds of herbs and flowers, of all which I remain in ignorance as to their properties, with the exception of the aloe, which I have directed today to be taken on board in large quantities for the use of your Highnesses. I did not set sail today for Cuba, nor shall I do so, for want of wind, a dead calm and heavy rain prevailing. Yesterday it rained much without cold; the days here are hot, and the nights mild like May in Andalusia.

Wednesday, Oct. 24th. At midnight weighed anchor and set sail from Cabo del Isleo of the island of Isabela, being in the north part, where I had remained preparing to depart for the island of Cuba, in which place the Indians tell me I shall find a great trade, with abundance of gold and spices, and large ships, and merchants; they direct me to steer toward the W.S.W., which is the course I am pursuing. If the accounts which the natives of the islands and those on board the ships, have communicated to me by signs (for their language I do not understand) may be relied on, this must be the island of Cipango, of which we have heard so many wonderful things; according to the globes I have seen and the maps of the world, it must be somewhere in this neighbourhood. I continued our course W.S.W. till day, when the wind died away, while the rain which had been falling most of the night continued. I remained thus with little wind till the afternoon, when it began to blow finely: I crowded all sail — mainsail and

two bonnets,<sup>41</sup> foresail, spritsail, mizzen, topsail, and the boat's sail on the poop — and kept on our course till dusk, when Cabo Verde, which is in the southwesterly part of the island of Fernandina, bore N.W. seven leagues distant. The wind continuing to blow fresh, and not knowing the distance to the said island of Cuba, I determined not to run for it during the night, as these islands have bold shores, no bottom being obtained at more than two *lombarda*-shots from the land, add to this that the bottom is all in patches, one piece rock and another sand, which makes it unsafe to anchor without looking closely. I therefore ordered all the sails to be taken in except the foresail, and kept on under that; suddenly the wind increased, and we began to make much progress, on this uncertain route, while it was very cloudy with rain; I ordered the foresail to be taken in, and this night we did not make two leagues etc.'<sup>42</sup>

Thursday, Oct. 25th. Sailed after sunrise W.S.W. till 9 o'clock, a distance of five leagues, then altered their course to W., and went at the rate of eight miles an hour till one o'clock; they continued on till three in the afternoon, having gone forty-four miles, when they discovered land, which proved to be seven or eight islands,<sup>43</sup> all extending from north to south, at five leagues distant, etc.

Friday, Oct. 26th. They anchored south of these islands, finding the water shallow five or six leagues off the shore. The Indians on board told them that the island of Cuba

<sup>41</sup> An extra strip of canvas, called a bonnet, was laced beneath the sail, there being no reef-points to shake out.

<sup>42</sup> Here the words of Columbus cease for the present, and the narrative continues in the language of Las Casas.

<sup>43</sup> Nurse Cay, the Ragged Islands.

was distant from thence a voyage of a day and a half in their skiffs, which are small things, made of a log, and carrying no sail. (He means canoes.)<sup>44</sup> Departed for Cuba, which from the Indians signifying to them the abundance of gold and pearls there, as well as the magnitude of the island, they doubted not, was Cipango.<sup>45</sup>

Saturday, Oct. 27th. They weighed anchor at sunrise, and left these islands, which they named *Las Islas de Arena*<sup>46</sup> on account of the shoals which extend out from them half a dozen leagues to the south. Sailed S.S.W., eight miles an hour, till one o'clock, having gone forty miles; by night they had proceeded twenty-eight more in the same direction; before dark they discovered land. They kept a diligent watch through the night which proved very rainy. They sailed on Saturday, by sunset, seventeen leagues to the S.S.W.

Sunday, Oct. 28th. Continued on S.S.W., to claim the island of Cuba, making for the nearest point of its shore. They entered a fine river, free from shallows and all other obstructions, which in fact is the case with all the coast here, the shore being very bold and the bottom quite clean up to the beach. The mouth of the river had a depth of water of twelve fathoms, and a breadth sufficient for ships to beat in. They anchored about one *lom-*

<sup>44</sup> "These are the canoes." Presumably a note by Las Casas; Columbus always uses a Spanish term instead of the Indian "canoe."

<sup>45</sup> The belief that Cipango was a part of the newly discovered country, continued for some time. In a letter written by Columbus to the Pope, in 1502, he introduces the following remark. — "This island is Tarsis, Cethia, Ophir, Ophaz and Cipango, we have named it Española."

<sup>46</sup> The Sandy Islands.

*barda* shot within the river, and the Admiral states that the prospect here exceeded in beauty anything he ever saw, the river being surrounded with trees of the most beautiful and luxuriant foliage of a different appearance from ours, and covered with flowers and fruits of all sorts. Birds, large and small, were here in abundance singing most delightfully. Great numbers of palm trees were noticed, different from those of Guinea and ours, wanting their particular manner of bark; they were of a moderate height, and bore very large leaves, which the natives use for coverings to their houses. The land appeared quite level. The Admiral jumped into the boat and went ashore, and came to two houses, which he supposed to be those of fishermen, and that the owners had fled; he found in one of them a dog unable to bark. Both houses contained nets of palm, lines, horn fish-hooks, harpoons of bone, and other implements for fishing, as also many fire-places, and each seemed to be adapted to the reception of a large number of persons. The Admiral gave orders that nothing should be touched, which directions were adhered to. The grass was as high as it is in Andalusia in April and May, and they found purslain and wild amaranth in abundance. They returned on board the boat and ascended the river some distance, where the Admiral says it was exceedingly pleasant to behold the delightful verdure and foliage which presented itself, not to mention the birds in the neighbourhood; the whole offered a scene of such enchantment that it was hardly possible to part from it. He declares this to be the most beautiful island that eyes have ever seen, abounding in good harbours, and deep rivers, with a shore upon which it ap-

pears that the sea never breaks high, as the grass grows down to the water's edge, a thing which never happens where the sea is rough. Indeed a high sea they had not as yet experienced among these islands. This isle, he says, is full of pleasant mountains, which are lofty, although not of great extent; the rest of the country is high, after the manner of Sicily, abounding in streams, as they understood from the Indians of Guanahani, which were on board the ships, who informed them by signs that it contained ten large rivers, and was of such a size that with their canoes they could not sail round it in twenty days. When the ships were sailing towards the island, some of the natives put off from the shore in two canoes, and perceiving the Spaniards entering into the boat and rowing towards the mouth of the river to sound for an anchorage, they took to flight. The Indians told them there were mines of gold here; also pearls, and the Admiral observed a likely place, with mussels, which are an indication of these articles. The Admiral also understood from them that there came large ships hither from the Great Can, and that the main land was distant ten days voyage. The Admiral named this river and port San Salvador.<sup>47</sup>

Monday, Oct. 29th. They weighed anchor and sailed from this port towards the west, in quest of the city where it appeared to be signified to them by the Indians, that they would meet with the king. A point of the island <sup>48</sup> extended towards the Northwest, six leagues from the place of their departure, and another <sup>49</sup> ten leagues towards the east. A

<sup>47</sup> The Bay of Nipe in the eastern part of Cuba.

<sup>48</sup> Punta de Mulas.

<sup>49</sup> Punta Cabaña.

league farther on, they discovered a river with a narrow entrance, which the Admiral named *Rio de la Luna*.<sup>50</sup> They continued on till the hour of Vespers<sup>51</sup> and descried another river larger than those they had yet seen, which also the Indians signified to them in the usual manner; on the banks they saw many collections of houses, the Admiral named it *Rio de Mares*.<sup>52</sup> He dispatched two boats to land in order to get some communication with the people, in one of them he sent an Indian of those on board, as they now understood some Spanish and appeared to be contented with the company of the Christians; the people on shore, men, women and children all fled at their approach, abandoning their dwellings and goods, which the Admiral ordered should not receive the least injury. He states the houses to have been the finest he had yet seen, and thinks the nearer he approaches toward the continent, the more they will continue improving: they were of a large size, constructed in the manner of a booth, and each collection of them appeared like tents in a camp without any order of streets, but scattered here and there; the interiors were found very clean and neat, and their furnishings well made; they were all built of fine palm branches. They found here many statues in the shape of women, and numerous heads in the style of masks, well executed; whether these were used as ornaments, or objects of worship, did not appear. Here were dogs that never bark, and small fowl originally wild, but now tame about the houses, as also

<sup>50</sup> Probably Puerto de Banos.

<sup>51</sup> 6 P.M.

<sup>52</sup> Puerto de las Nuevitas del Príncipe.

curious collections of nets, hooks, and other gear for fishing, but the Spaniards, as they were ordered, touched nothing. The Admiral was of opinion that the inhabitants of the coast were all fishermen, and carried what they took into the interior of the island, as it is a very large one, and so beautiful he never tires of praising it. He says that he met trees with fruits of a most delicious taste, and that there are undoubtedly cows or other cattle in the island, as he saw skulls, which appeared to be those of cows.<sup>58</sup> All the night they were entertained with melody of the birds and crickets; the air was mild and soft throughout the night, neither hot nor cold. In the other islands he states the heat to have been excessive, but here it was temperate like May. The heat of the other islands he ascribes to their being level, and the wind, which blows there, being from the East and consequently hot. The water of the rivers was found to be salt at the mouths: it was not known where the Indians obtained their drinking water, which was met with fresh in their houses. This river was broad enough for the ships to manœuvre in on their entry or departure, and the land contained many marks to serve as directions for steering. It was seven or eight fathoms deep at the mouth, and five inside. The sea about here, he says, appears to be ever as smooth as the river at Seville, and the water very favourable for the growth of pearls. Here were periwinkles of a large size, but tasteless, unlike those of Spain. The river and port of San Salvador, above mentioned, he describes as marked by lofty and beautiful mountains, like

<sup>58</sup> No large animals existed in the West Indies; perhaps a buffalo-skull had been introduced from North America.



the Peña de los Enamorados,<sup>54</sup> one of them containing on its summit a protuberance in the form of a handsome mosque. The other river and harbour, where they now remain, has upon the S.E. two mountains of a round shape, and at the W.N.W. a fine level cape extends into the sea.

Tuesday, Oct. 30th. They left the river which they had named Rio de Mares, and standing to the N.W. discovered a cape covered with palm trees, which the Admiral called *Cabo de Palmas*;<sup>55</sup> it was fifteen leagues distant from the place of their departure. The Indians on board the *Pinta* signified to the Spaniards, that beyond this cape was a river,<sup>56</sup> and from this river to Cuba, was a distance of four days voyage or journey. The Captain of the *Pinta* declared that he understood this Cuba to be a city,<sup>57</sup> and that the land here was a continent of great size which extended far to the North; also that the king of this country was at war with the Great Can, whom the Indians called *Cami*, and his country or city *Fava* and other names. The Admiral determined to steer for this river, and dispatch a present and the letter of the Sovereigns to the king: this he judged best to perform by means of a mariner he had on board, who had formerly been in Guinea, and some of the Indians of Guanahani, who wished to go with him and then return with him to their country. The Admiral states the latitude of this place to be forty-two degrees North, if

<sup>54</sup> Near Granada.

<sup>55</sup> Now called Alto de Juan Dañue.

<sup>56</sup> Rio Maximo.

<sup>57</sup> They were already in the island of Cuba and the Captain may have been right, though Las Casas suggests that the Indians meant the province of Cubanacan, where the gold mines lay.

the manuscript from which I have copied this be correct,<sup>58</sup> and says he must proceed on to the Great Can, whom he supposed was to be found thereabout, or at his city of Cathay which he affirms to be a very large city, according as he had learned before he sailed from Spain. All the land here he describes as pleasant and level, bordered with a deep sea.

Wednesday, Oct. 31st. All Tuesday night they beat up and down, and then came to a river which they could not enter for the shoals at the mouth; the Indians thought it as easy to enter with the ships as they did with their canoes. Proceeding onward they discovered a cape<sup>59</sup> extending far into the sea, and surrounded with shallows; they saw also a bay capable of receiving small vessels, which they could not reach, as the wind had shifted to the North, and the coast ran N.N.W. and S.E.: another cape which they saw farther onward, extended still farther into the sea. For this reason and observing from the appearance of the heavens that it threatened to blow violently, they returned to Rio de Mares.

Thursday, Nov. 1st. At sunrise the Admiral sent the boats to land to visit the houses they saw there; they found the inhabitants all fled, but after some time a man appeared; the Admiral ordered that he should be left to gain confidence, and the boats returned; after dinner he dispatched one of his Indians on shore, who called out to him from a distance and bade him not be fearful, as the Span-

<sup>58</sup> Columbus is counting in degrees of half the normal length, hence the hesitation of Las Casas was unwarranted.

<sup>59</sup> Now called Punta de Maternillos.

iards were a friendly people, not injuring any one, nor belonging to the Great Can, but on the contrary, had made many presents of their goods among the inhabitants of the islands. Then the Indian swam ashore, and two of the natives took him by the arms and brought him to a house, where he gave them the information they required. The natives having ascertained that no ill was intended them, gathered confidence, and came in above sixteen canoes to the ships, bringing cotton yarn and other trifles, which the Admiral ordered should not be taken from them, as he wished them to understand that he was in search of nothing but gold, which they call *nucay*. All day the canoes kept passing between the ships and the shore, with all confidence. The Admiral saw no gold among them, but remarks having observed an Indian with a bit of wrought silver fastened at his nostrils, which he conceived to be an indication of the existence of that metal in the country. The Indians informed them by signs that within three days there would come many traders from the interior to purchase the goods of the Spaniards, to whom they would communicate news of the king, who as far as could be learnt from the signs of the natives, was about four days journey distant. They informed the Spaniards also that many persons had been sent right through the country to inform him respecting the Admiral. 'These people,' says the Admiral, 'are of the same race and manners with those already observed, without any religion that I could discover; I had never remarked the Indians whom I kept on board the ships to be engaged in any sort of devotion of their own, but they would upon being directed, make

the sign of the cross, and repeat the *Salve* and *Ave Maria* with the hands extended towards heaven. The language is the same throughout, and the people friends to one another; I believe this to be the case in all the islands, and that they are at war with the Great Can, whom they call *Cavila*, and his country *Bajan*. These people go naked like the rest.' These are the words of the Admiral. The river here he describes as deep, and having a bold shore at the mouth, where ships may lay close to the land; the water of the river salt for a league upwards when it becomes very fresh. 'It is certain,' says the Admiral, 'that this is the continent, and that I am in front of Zayto and Guinsay,'<sup>60</sup> a hundred leagues, more or less, distant from the one or the other, and it is clear that the sea is beginning to have a different character, and I found it cold yesterday when I was sailing N.W.'

Friday, Nov. 2d. The Admiral resolved to send two of the Spaniards into the country; those whom he selected for this purpose were Rodrigo de Jerez who lived at Ayamonte, and Luis de Torres, who had lived with the Adelantado of Murcia, and knew Hebrew, Chaldaic, and some Arabic;<sup>61</sup> he had been formerly a Jew; to these he joined two of the natives, one of those he had brought from Guanahani, and another belonging to the houses near the river. He gave them strings of beads to purchase provisions, if they had need, and directed them to return

<sup>60</sup> Columbus being persuaded that he had arrived at the continent of Asia, thought himself near the Chinese cities which Marco Polo described.

<sup>61</sup> The existence of Arab and Jewish trading communities in China would make these languages the natural means of communication with the Mongol Khan.

within six days. Specimens of spicery were intrusted to them that they might judge if any thing similar existed in the country. He took care to instruct them how they should inquire for the king of that land, and what they were to say on behalf of the Sovereigns of Castile, how they had dispatched the Admiral with letters and a present for him, and to learn his condition and gain his friendship, supplying him with whatever he required of them. Furthermore the envoys were instructed to obtain a knowledge of certain provinces, and observe the ports and rivers on which the Admiral had notes, with their distances from the place where the ships lay, &c. The Admiral here took an observation, and found the latitude to be forty-two [half-] degrees; according to his calculation, their distance from the island of Ferro was eleven hundred and forty-two leagues.<sup>62</sup> He was fully persuaded that this was the continent.

Saturday, Nov. 3d. In the morning the Admiral went on board his boat, and observing that the river formed at its mouth a great lake, which made an ample harbour, very deep and free from rocks, with a fine beach very fit for careening ships, as well as plenty of wood on shore, he rowed up the stream a couple of leagues to the fresh water, and going on shore, ascended a hill to take a view of the country, but nothing of the inhabitants was seen on account of the thickness of the woods, which were very fresh and very odoriferous, leading him to believe that aromatic plants abounded there. The beauty of the entire prospect was such that he declares his eyes were never tired with

<sup>62</sup> The true distance was eleven hundred and five leagues.

viewing it, not to mention the singing of birds, large and small. Great numbers of canoes came to the ships this day for the purpose of bartering their cotton, and nets on which they sleep (hammocks).

Sunday, Nov. 4th. Early in the morning the Admiral went on shore in the boat to shoot the birds, which he had seen the day before, and at his return, Martin Alonso Pinzon came to him with two pieces of cinnamon, saying that a Portuguese on board his vessel had seen an Indian with two large bundles of it, but was afraid to purchase it on account of the prohibition of the Admiral, and furthermore that the Indian had some reddish things resembling nutmegs. The boatswain of the Pinto declared he had seen cinnamon trees. The Admiral went to the place but found they were not. He showed some of the natives pepper and cinnamon which he had brought from Castile, they recognized it as he declares, and intimated to him by signs that much of it was to be found not far from thence to the southeast. He likewise showed them gold and pearls, and was informed by some old men that gold existed in great abundance in a place which they called *Bohio*,<sup>63</sup> being worn by the people at their necks, ears, arms and legs, and pearls also. They had, according to the same account, large ships, and carried on traffic, and this was all at the southeast. They further informed him that at a distance there were men with one eye only, and others with snouts like dogs, who were man-eaters, and accustomed upon

<sup>63</sup> *Bohio*, according to Las Casas, meant *house*, but Columbus always takes it as the name of the island he called Española, which is now known by its other Indian name of Haiti.

taking a prisoner, to behead him, drink his blood, and cut off his privy members. The Admiral then determined to return to his ship and wait for the men whom he had sent into the country, when he was resolved to depart in quest of the regions which had been described to him, unless he should receive such accounts from the interior as would induce him to stay. He says 'these people are very mild and timorous, naked as I have described the others, without weapons or laws. The soil is very fertile, abounding with *mames*,<sup>64</sup> a root like a carrot, with a taste of chestnut. Beans, likewise are here, very dissimilar to ours, also cotton, not sown but growing to large trees spontaneously among the mountains; I am of opinion that this is gathered at all seasons of the year, as I observed upon a single tree, blossoms, pods unripe, and others burst open. A thousand other productions, which are doubtless of great value, I remarked, but find it impossible to describe them.' All this is in the words of the Admiral.

Monday, Nov. 5th. In the morning the Admiral ordered the ships to be careened, one at a time, the other two remaining afloat for security, although he declares the natives were very friendly, and that they might without hazard have careened them all together. While they were about this, the boatswain of the *Niña* came to him demanding a reward for having discovered mastick, the specimen, however, he did not exhibit, having lost it. The Admiral promised him the reward, and sent Rodrigo Sanchez and Maestre Diego to examine the trees; they brought back a portion of the gum and of the wood, which he preserved

<sup>64</sup> Sweet potatoes, yams.

for the King and Queen. He says that it was evidently masstick, although, to be good, it should be collected at the proper season; and that there were trees in their neighbourhood sufficient to yield a thousand quintals a year. Here too he states that he found much of that sort of wood which appeared to be aloe. This harbour which he called *Puerto de Mares*<sup>65</sup> is, according to his account, one of the best in the world, with a fine air, and the inhabitants very gentle. Here is a rocky promontory, upon which a fort might be built to defend the merchants from any other nations if this should become a place of any trade. The Admiral adds 'May our Lord, in whose hands are all victories, direct all things to His service.' An Indian informed him by signs that the mastick was beneficial to them when they were afflicted with pain in the stomach.

Tuesday, Nov. 6th. 'Last night,' says the Admiral, 'the two men whom I had sent into the country returned, and related as follows. After having travelled a dozen leagues they came to a town containing about fifty houses, where there were probably a thousand inhabitants, every house containing a great number; they were built in the manner of large booths. The inhabitants received them after their fashion with great ceremony; the men and women flocked to behold them, and lodged them in their best houses, touching them, kissing their hands and feet, and making signs of wonder. They imagined them come from heaven, and signified as much to them. They were feasted with such food as the natives had to offer. Upon their arrival at the town they were led by the arms of the principal men of

<sup>65</sup> Puerto de las Nuevitas del Príncipe.



the place, to the chief dwelling, here they gave them two seats, and the Indians sat upon the ground in a circle round them. The Indian who accompanied them explained to the natives the manner in which the Christians lived, and said they were good people. The men then left the place, and the women entered, and seated themselves around them in the same manner, kissing their hands and feet, and examining whether they were flesh and bone like themselves. They entreated them to remain there as long as five days.' The Spaniards showed them the cinnamon, pepper and other spices which they had received from the Admiral, and they informed them by signs that there was much of these in the neighbourhood at the southeast, but they knew not of any in this place. The Spaniards not discovering any great number of towns here, resolved to return to the ships, and had they chosen to admit the natives to accompany them, might have been attended back by more than five hundred men and women, who were eager to bear them company, thinking they were returning to heaven. They took none along with them but one of the principal inhabitants with his son and a servant; with these the Admiral held conversation, and showed them great civilities; the Indian described to him by signs many countries and islands in these parts, and the Admiral thought to carry him home to the Sovereign, but says he was unable to find whether the Indian was willing. At night he seemed to grow fearful, and wish to go on shore; the Admiral says, that having the ship aground he thought it not advisable to oppose him, and so let him return, requesting him to come back the next morning, but they saw him no more.

The two Christians upon their journey met with great multitudes of people, men and women with firebrands in their hands and herbs to smoke after their custom.<sup>66</sup> No village was seen upon the road of a larger size than five houses, but all the inhabitants showed them the same respect. Many sorts of trees were observed, and herbs and odoriferous flowers. Great numbers of birds they remarked, all different from those of Spain except the nightingales, who entertained them with their songs, and the partridges and geese, which were found in abundance. Of four-footed beasts they saw none except dogs that cannot bark. The soil appeared fertile and under good cultivation, producing the *mames* aforementioned, *frijoles* and beans very dissimilar to ours, as well as the grain called panic-grass. They saw vast quantities of cotton, gathered, spun and manufactured, a single house contained above five hundred *arrobas*;<sup>67</sup> four thousand quintals might be collected here per annum. The Admiral says it appears to him that they do not sow it, but that it is productive the

<sup>66</sup> Las Casas in his General History of the Indies gives the following relation of this circumstance: 'These two Christians met upon their journey, great numbers of people of both sexes going to their villages; the men always with a firebrand in their hands and certain herbs for smoking: these are dry, and fixed in a leaf also dry, after the manner of those paper tubes which the boys in Spain use at Whitsuntide: having lighted one end they draw in the smoke by sucking at the other, this causes a drowsiness and sort of intoxication, and according to their accounts relieves them from the sensation of fatigue. These tubes they call by the name of *tabacos*. I knew many Spaniards in the island of Española who were addicted to the use of them, and on being reproached with it as a bad habit, replied that they could not bring themselves to give it up. I do not see what relish or benefit they could find in them.' Here we see the origin of cigars.

<sup>67</sup> An *arroba* is twenty-five pounds or thirty-two pints.

whole year round; it is very fine with an exceeding long staple. Every thing which the Indians possessed they were ready to barter at a very low price; a large basket of cotton they would give for a leather thong, or other trifling thing which was offered them. 'They are,' says the Admiral, 'an inoffensive, unwarlike people, naked, except that the women wear a cotton thing only just large enough to cover the privates; their manners are very decent, and their complexion not very dark, but lighter than that of the inhabitants of the Canary Islands. I have no doubt, most serene Princes,' says the Admiral, 'that were proper devout and religious persons to come among them and learn their language, it would be an easy matter to convert them all to Christianity, and I hope in our Lord that your Highnesses will devote yourselves with much diligence to this object, and bring into the church so many multitudes, inasmuch as you have exterminated those who refused to confess the Father, Son and Holy Ghost,<sup>68</sup> so that having ended your days (as we are all mortal) you may leave your dominions in a tranquil condition, free from heresy and wickedness, and meet with a favourable reception before the eternal Creator, whom may it please to grant you a long life and great increase of kingdoms and dominions, with the will and disposition to promote, as you always have done, the holy Christian religion, Amen.

This day I launched the ship, and made ready to depart in the name of God, next Thursday, for the S.E. in quest of gold and spices, as well as to discover the country.'

<sup>68</sup> This refers to the Moors and Jews, as has been seen in the preface of Columbus.

These are the words of the Admiral, who expected to sail on the Thursday, but the wind being contrary, it detained him till the twelfth day of November.

Monday, Nov. 12th. They sailed from the port and river de Mares at day break: they directed their course in search of an island which the Indians on board affirmed repeatedly was called *Babeque*,<sup>69</sup> where as they related by signs, the inhabitants collected gold at night by torchlight upon the shore, and afterwards hammered it into bars. In order to reach this island they directed to steer East by South. Having sailed eight leagues along the coast, they discovered a river, and four leagues farther onward, another, very large, exceeding in size all which they had seen. The Admiral was unwilling to remain, and put into either of them, for two reasons, the first and principal one, because the wind and weather were favourable to proceed to the above-mentioned island of Babeque; the other was, that were there any populous or famous towns near the sea, they might easily be discovered, but in case they were far up the rivers, they could only be reached by ascending the stream in small vessels, which those of his fleet were not: thus he would lose much time, and such rivers should be the subject of a special exploration. The whole of this coast was inhabited, especially near the river he named *Rio del Sol*.<sup>70</sup> He states that the Sunday previous, he had thought it would be well to take a few of the

<sup>69</sup> Great Inagua, to judge by what Columbus afterwards says on its position, but the chief sources of gold in these islands were Española and Porto Rico; an identification with Porto Rico is therefore plausible, though the name of this island was stated to be Burenquen.

<sup>70</sup> Puerto del Padre.

natives from the river where the ships lay, for the purpose of carrying them to the Sovereigns, that they might acquire our language, and inform us what their country contained, besides becoming mouthpieces of the Christians and adopting our customs and the things of the Faith, 'for I have observed,' says the Admiral, 'that these people have no religion, neither are they idolaters, but are a very gentle race, without the knowledge of any iniquity; they neither kill, nor steal, nor carry weapons, and are so timid that one of our men might put a hundred of them to flight, although they will readily sport and play tricks with them. They have a knowledge that there is a God above, and are firmly persuaded that we have come from heaven. They very quickly learn such prayers as we repeat to them, and also to make the sign of the cross. Your Highnesses should therefore adopt the resolution of converting them to Christianity, in which enterprise, I am of opinion that a very short space of time would suffice to gain to our holy faith multitudes of people, and to Spain, great riches and immense dominions, with all their inhabitants; there being, without doubt, in these countries vast quantities of gold, for the Indians would not without cause give us such descriptions of places where the inhabitants dug it from the earth, and wore it in massy bracelets at their necks, ears, legs, and arms. Here are also pearls and precious stones, and an infinite amount of spices. In the river de Mares which I left last evening, there is undoubtedly a great deal of mastick, and the quantity might be increased, for the trees transplanted, easily take root; they are of a lofty size, bearing leaves and fruit like the lentisk; the

tree, however, is taller and has a larger leaf than the lentisk, as is mentioned by Pliny, and as I have myself observed in the island of Chios in the Archipelago. I ordered many of these trees to be tapped to see if resin would issue, but as the weather was rainy all the time I was in the river, I was unable to procure more than a very small portion, which I have preserved for your Highnesses. It is possible also that this is not the proper season for collecting it, which, I believe, may be in the spring, when they begin to put forth their blossoms; at present the fruit upon them is nearly ripe. Great quantities of cotton might be raised here, and sold, as I think, profitably, without being carried to Spain, but to the cities of the Great Can, which we shall doubtless discover, as well as many others belonging to other sovereigns who will be pleased to serve your Highnesses, trading thither with the productions of Spain and the other Eastern countries (for these lands are west of us.) Here also is to be found abundance of aloe, which however is not a thing of very great value, but the mastick assuredly is, being met with nowhere else except in the before-mentioned island of Chios, where if I remember rightly it is produced to the amount of fifty thousand ducats value in a year. The mouth of this river forms the best harbour I have yet seen, being wide, deep and free from shoals, with a fine situation for a town and fortification where ships may lie close along the walls, the land high, with a good air and fine streams of water.

Yesterday a canoe came to the ship with six young men, five of them came on board, whom I ordered to be detained, and have them with me; I then sent ashore to one

of the houses, and took seven women and three children: this I did that the Indians might tolerate their life in Spain better in company with women of their own country, for it has often happened that the Portuguese have carried the natives from Guinea to Portugal, for the purpose of learning their language, and when this was done, and they returned with them to Guinea, expecting by reason of the good treatment they had showed them, and the presents they had given them, to find great benefit in their use, they have gone among their own people and never appeared more. Others have done differently, and by keeping their wives, readily perform their set duties. Besides, these women will be a great help to us in acquiring their language, which is the same throughout all these countries, the inhabitants keeping up a communication among the islands by means of their canoes. This is not the case in Guinea, where there are a thousand different dialects, one tribe not understanding another. This evening came on board, the husband of one of the women, and father of the three children, which were a boy and two girls, he entreated me to let him accompany them, which I very willingly granted; the natives whom I had taken from here, were all so delighted at this as to induce me to think them his relations. He is a person of about forty-five years of age.' All this is in the exact words of the Admiral; he also says that he found the weather somewhat cold, and being in the winter, thought it not advisable to prosecute his discoveries any farther towards the north.<sup>71</sup> This day, Mon-

<sup>71</sup> From what he here relates, it appears that had he proceeded Northerly he would undoubtedly, in two days, have discovered Florida. — Las Casas.

day, they sailed by sunset, eighteen leagues, East by South, to a cape which he named *Cabo de Cuba*.<sup>72</sup>

Tuesday, Nov. 13th. All night were, as the sailors say, on a bowline, beating up and down and making no progress, which was done for the purpose of examining a gap between two ranges of mountains which they had noticed at sunset, and which seemed to be a separation between the land of Cuba and that of Bohio,<sup>73</sup> this the Indians on board signified to them. At daylight they made sail towards the land, and passed a point which appeared at night to be a matter of two leagues; they then entered a spacious gulf five leagues to the S.S.E., and saw a cape five leagues farther onward where, between two high mountains there was discernible a large gap: whether this was a strait of the sea, they could not determine; and because of the Admiral was anxious to proceed on to the island they called Babeque, where, as he understood there was much gold, and this island was to the East, he put out to sea, perceiving no shelter on the coast from the violence of the wind, which blew more strongly than ever; they kept on their course East, with the wind from the North, eight miles an hour, till sunset, when they had sailed fifty-six miles, which are fourteen leagues, East from Cabo de Cuba. Of the coast of Bohio, which was to leeward, they had viewed apparently eighty miles, or twenty leagues, beginning at the cape of the gulf above mentioned. All this coast runs E.S.E. and W.N.W.

Wednesday, Nov. 14th. Stood off and on during the

<sup>72</sup> Punta de Mulas.

<sup>73</sup> Sierras del Cristal & Sierras del Moa; the land was still Cuba.



night, not judging it safe to sail among the islands in the dark until they had been explored. The Indians informed them yesterday that the distance from Rio de Mares to the island of Babeque was three days voyage, this of course was to be understood of a voyage in their canoes, which go about seven leagues in a day. The wind was light, and though their direction was East, it would not allow them to steer nearer this course than S.E.; these, and other hindrances which are related, kept them from making any progress before morning. At sunrise the Admiral, in consequence of the wind having shifted from N. to N.E. determined to steer for the land, and seek a harbour, and in the event of not meeting with one, to return to that he last quitted in the island of Cuba. Having gone that night twenty-four miles East by South, he stood South . . . miles for the land, and arriving near, saw many islands, inlets, and harbours; the wind blowing strong with a high sea, he did not dare risk an entrance into either of them, but kept along the coast N.W. by W., still looking out for a harbour: a great many were seen, but none of them appeared quite clear of rocks; having gone in this manner sixty-four miles, he came to a very deep entrance, a quarter of a mile wide, with a river, forming a good haven,<sup>74</sup> here he entered and found it spacious and deep, containing so many islands that they could not be counted, these were of a good size and lofty, covered with trees of a thousand different sorts and countless palms. The Admiral was struck with admiration at viewing so many islands of such a height, and declares to the King and Queen that he be-

<sup>74</sup> Probably Puerto de Tanamo, in Cuba.

believes there are not higher mountains in the world than those which he saw along the coast, and among these islands, and that none equal them in beauty, they being without clouds or snow. At the feet of these mountains there is great depth of water. He states it as his opinion that these islands are the innumerable ones which in the maps, are placed at the extremity of the East, and says he believes they contain great riches, precious stones, and spicery, and extend far to the South, spreading out on each side. He named this place *La Mar de Nuestra Señora*, and the harbour near the strait which is the entrance to these islands, he called *Puerto del Principe*, of which he made no further survey than by viewing it from without, till he returned to it on the Saturday of the following week, as will afterwards appear. The Admiral dilates very much upon the fertility, beauty and loftiness of these islands, and cautions the Sovereigns not to be surprised at the great admiration he expresses, for as he assures them he does not represent a hundredth part of the truth. Some of these mountains appeared to reach to the skies, and were shaped like the points of diamonds, and others very lofty with table summits. A great depth of water was at their feet, so that the largest carrack,<sup>75</sup> might lie there. None of them were rocky, but all covered with wood.

Thursday, Nov. 15th. The Admiral went with the boats to visit the islands, of which he gives a wonderful description, and says he found mastick and great abundance of aloe. Some of the islands were cultivated with the roots which the Indians use in making their bread.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>75</sup> A ship of the largest size.

<sup>76</sup> Cassava.

Fire was found burning in several places. They met with no fresh water. A few inhabitants were seen, who fled. They found the water in depth from fifteen to sixteen fathoms, with a sandy bottom, and no rocks, a very desirable thing to mariners, as these last are very dangerous in cutting the cables.

Friday, Nov. 16th. As he made it a practice in all those countries and islands, on going on shore, to set up and leave there, a cross,<sup>77</sup> so the Admiral went in the boat to the mouth of this port, and upon a point of land, found two large trunks of trees, one longer than the other, laid across each other in the shape of a cross, so exactly that he says a carpenter could not have done the thing with more precision; having paid their adorations to this, he ordered that these trunks should be taken and made into a large and lofty crucifix. Canes were found about the shore, but they could not discover where they grew. The Admiral thought they had floated down some river, and were washed ashore, and in this he was right. He entered a cove or inlet within the entrance of the port toward the South East; here he found a rocky promontory with a very bold shore, where the largest carrack in the world might lie close to the land, with a recess or corner in which half a dozen ships might lie without anchors as in a dock. This appeared to him a convenient situation for a fortress, in case these islands should ever become a great mart of trade. Returning to the ship, he found the Indians on board fishing for winkles,

<sup>77</sup> He also used to give the natives such instruction in Christianity as he was able, which may account for the presence of what appear to be Christian elements in the recorded mythology of Cuba.

which are found of a large size in these seas. He made the crew dive here and search for mother-of-pearl shells, the oysters in which pearls are found; they succeeded in obtaining many of them, but no pearls; this he thought was owing to the season being unfit, and was of opinion that the proper time must be in May and June. The sailors found a creature which appeared like a *taso*<sup>78</sup> or *taxo*. They fished with nets and took among others a fish exactly resembling a hog, not like a tunny but totally covered with a shell of exceeding hardness, being soft nowhere except for the eyes, the tail and a hole beneath it for the evacuation of its superfluities. The Admiral directed it to be preserved by salting, as a curiosity for the Sovereigns to see.

Saturday, Nov. 17th. The Admiral went on board the boat in the morning for the purpose of visiting the islands in the South West, which had not been surveyed. A great number were discovered, very fertile and of a beautiful appearance, with the water very deep among them; in several of these, streams of fresh water were seen running down to the sea, which were thought to proceed from springs among the mountains. Proceeding onward, he came to a fine river of fresh water, which was found to be very cool; here was also a delightful meadow, with great numbers of palm trees more lofty than any he had yet seen; he found nutmegs as large as those of India, I think he says, and large rats also like those of India, besides

<sup>78</sup> Las Casas was unfamiliar with this word. Ferdinand Columbus must have read it as *texon*, for the Italian version of his book renders it "badger."

craw-fish of enormous size. Great flocks of birds were seen, and they smelt a powerful odour of musk, which article, he entertained no doubt, was to be met with in these parts. This day the two oldest of the Indians which had been taken at Rio de Mares, and sent on board the Niña made their escape.

Sunday, Nov. 18th. The Admiral with many of the crew, went in the boats to land, for the purpose of setting up the cross which had been made from the logs before-mentioned: this was done at the entrance of Puerto del Principe, where was selected a beautiful spot, clear of wood, for the situation: it was a lofty elevation and afforded an enchanting prospect. He says that the sea here ebbs and flows much more than at any other port he has visited in these countries; this he thinks must be ascribed to the multitude of islands in the neighbourhood. The tide, he informs us, is the reverse of what it is among us, for when the moon is S.W. by S. it is low water in this port. Being Sunday he remained here through the day.

Monday, Nov. 19th. Set sail before sunrise, but met with a calm. At noon it began to blow a little from the east, and he steered N.N.E.; at sunset Puerto del Principe bore S.S.W. seven leagues distant. He came in sight of the island of Babeque, which bore exactly east, at the distance of some sixty miles. They sailed N.E. all night with a light wind, making a progress of sixty miles, and at ten o'clock the next day, they had completed a dozen more, which amount to eighteen leagues in the direction of N.E. by N.

Tuesday, Nov. 20th. The island or islands of Babeque

bore E.S.E., from which quarter the wind blew, being of course ahead. Seeing no prospect of the wind's shifting, and the sea being high, the Admiral resolved to put about and return to Puerto del Principe, from whence they had last sailed, and which was distant twenty-five leagues. He was unwilling to proceed to the island he had named Isabela, which was about a dozen leagues off, and where he might have anchored that day, for two reasons, the one, because he saw two islands to the south, which he wished to examine, the other because he feared that the Indians on board, which he had taken from Guanahani or San Salvador, as he called it, might effect their escape, as that island was only eight leagues distant from Isabela, this he was desirous to prevent, as he wished to carry them to Spain. The Indians, as he informs us, were given to understand that in case the Admiral met with gold he intended to set them at liberty. He arrived near Puerto del Principe, but was unable to enter, on account of the night, besides that the current carried him to the North West. He then put about and stood to the North East, under a strong breeze, which, however, abated about the third watch of the night, when he steered E.N.E.; the wind had changed to S.S.W., and at dawn it shifted again to full South and S.E. At sunrise he found Puerto del Principe to bear nearly S.W. by W., forty-eight miles or twelve leagues distant.

Wednesday, Nov. 21st. As soon as the sun had risen, they stood to the East with a Southerly wind; the currents being contrary, they made but little progress; at the hour of Vespers they had gone twenty-four miles, when the

wind shifted to the East, and they steered South by East, and by sunset sailed a dozen miles. Here the Admiral found their latitude to be forty-two [half-] degrees North, as at Puerto de Mares, but says he shall make no further use of his quadrant, till he arrives on shore, where he shall repair it. It appeared to him that they were not in reality so far to the North, and in this opinion he was right, for these islands lie only at . . . degrees. He was induced, he says, to think the quadrant was correct by observing that the north star appeared as high as in Castile, and if this was the fact, he must have been in as high a latitude as Florida, in this case what is the situation of the islands he has been mentioning? Moreover he states that the heat was excessive, but it is clear that if he had been upon the coast of Florida he would not have found it hot but cold, as it is manifest that in no part of the world is a great heat experienced in such a latitude except by some accidental cause, and even this I believe has never been known. This excessive heat which the Admiral says they suffered, indicates that in these Indies and in the parts where they were sailing there must be a great deal of gold.

Today Martin Alonso Pinzon, in the caravel *Pinta*, left the other ships, without leave and against the wishes of the Admiral, incited by his cupidity, upon the occasion of an Indian on board his vessel offering to direct him whither he might find much gold. Thus he abandoned them without any excuse of necessity, or stress of weather, and the Admiral remarks, 'he has by language and actions, occasioned me many other troubles.'

Thursday, Nov. 22d. Last night, sailed South by East,

with an easterly wind, which, however, blew very little. At the third watch it began to blow from the N.N.E.; they continued their course southerly, to examine the land which they saw in that quarter, and at sunrise found themselves as far distant from it, as they were the day before, by reason of the contrary currents; the land was forty miles distant. This night Martin Alonso steered to the East for the island of Babeque where the Indians told him there was much gold; he was in sight of the Admiral, about sixteen miles off. All night the Admiral stood towards the land, having taken in some of the sails, and carrying a light, as he thought the Pinta was steering towards him. The night was clear, and there was a fine breeze which might have enabled her to come up, had her commander been so disposed.

Friday, Nov. 23d. Kept on their course South towards the land with a light wind; the current set so strong against them, that they made no progress ahead, but found themselves at sunset, where they had been in the morning. The wind was E.N.E. and favourable for sailing to the South, except that it was light. Beyond the cape which they saw before them, extended out another headland toward the East, which the Indians on board called Bohio, and said it was very large, and contained inhabitants with one eye in their foreheads and others which they called *Canibals*, and spoke of them with many marks of fear; as soon as they saw the ships were taking that course they were struck with terror, and signified that they could not act as speakers because they would be eaten by these people, who were well armed. The Admiral declares



that he believes there is some truth in their representations, but thinks that these people described as possessing arms, must be a race of some sagacity, and that having made prisoners of some of the other Indians, their friends not finding them to return, concluded they had eaten them.<sup>79</sup> This, in fact, was the opinion entertained of the Christians and the Admiral by some of the natives at their first arrival.

Saturday, Nov. 24th. Sailed all night, and at the hour of Terce <sup>80</sup> in the morning, arrived at a flat island,<sup>81</sup> being the same which they had visited the week before in their voyage to the island of Babeque. At first the Admiral was unwilling to approach the shore, as it appeared to him that the surf would break heavily in that gap between the mountains. At length he proceeded to the gulf which he had named La Mar de Nuestra Señora, where the multitude of islands was discovered: here he entered the harbour which is situated at the entrance of the strait. He says, that had he before known of the existence of this harbour, and had not occupied himself with visiting the islands in the gulf, he should not have found it necessary to put back, although he looks upon the time as well bestowed in exploring the islands. Arrived at the land, he dispatched the boat and sounded the harbour, and the entrance was found from six to twenty fathoms deep, with a fine sandy bottom. He then sailed up the harbour with the ships, steering southwest and afterwards west, the low islands abovementioned bearing northerly and forming

<sup>79</sup> The *cannibalism* of the Caribs, who inhabited the southern islands, was fully established during subsequent explorations.

<sup>80</sup> 9 A.M.

<sup>81</sup> Cayo de Moa.

with another island a port sufficient to contain all the ships in Spain, where they might lie without moorings perfectly safe from all winds. The entrance here is from the south-east, and there is an outlet toward the west, very broad and deep, so that these islands may be sailed between by any one who knows them, coming from the north along the coast. They are at the foot of a high mountain which extends a considerable distance from East to West, and is the longest and most lofty among the infinite number which are to be found upon this coast. A ridge of rock runs along at the foot of the mountain like a bank, toward the entrance of the strait. Toward the Southeast, and in the direction of the low island, there is another reef, but small; between them the water is very deep and the passage wide, as is before remarked. Within the entrance at the Southeast, they discovered a river <sup>82</sup> very fair and wide, and of greater volume than any they had yet seen. The water was fresh quite to the sea. It had a bar at its mouth, but a good depth of eight or nine fathoms inside. The land here, as elsewhere, was totally covered with palm and other trees.

Sunday, Nov. 25th. Before sunrise the Admiral went in the boat to view a cape or point of land <sup>83</sup> to the Southeast of the low islands, about a league and a half distant, as it appeared to him there was in that quarter some convenient river. About two cross-bow shots from the cape to the Southeast, he discovered a fine stream running down a mountain with loud murmurs. He proceeded towards it, and found in the stream certain stones which shone with

<sup>82</sup> Rio de Moa.

<sup>83</sup> Punta del Mangle, or, del Guarico.

spots of a golden hue; <sup>84</sup> recollecting that gold was found in the river Tagus near the sea, he entertained no doubt that this was the metal, and directed that a collection of these stones should be made to carry to the King and Queen. While they were about this, the ship-boys cried out that they saw pine trees; the Admiral looked towards the mountain, and discovered pines of such loftiness and admirable shape, that he found it impossible to exaggerate in the description of them, their trunks being tall and straight as thin strong spindles. Here, he perceived that there might be procured masts, plank, and every such material for building the largest ships of Spain. Here were also oaks and arbutus, a convenient stream and good site for saw-mills; the land was high, and the air the most agreeable they had yet met with. Many stones of the colour of iron were found along the shore, and others which some of the men said, might have come out of silver mines; all these were brought down by the stream. They procured from the forest, a yard and mizzen-mast for the caravel *Niña*. Proceeding to the mouth of the river, they put into a bay <sup>85</sup> at the foot of the cape at the Southeast, which they found spacious and deep, and capable of containing a hundred ships without anchors or moorings; a finer port than this eyes had never seen. The mountains were very lofty, with many fine streams running down their sides; all were covered with forests of pines and very many other beautiful trees. Two or three other rivers were not explored by him. The whole he describes to the King and Queen with much enthusiasm: the pines especially, it gave him inex-

<sup>84</sup> Not gold.

<sup>85</sup> Puerto de Jaragua.

pressible happiness and joy to behold, as they afforded the means of building any desirable number of ships, importing rigging but finding plenty of wood and pitch there. He cannot represent, as he affirms, the hundredth part of what he saw, and declares that it pleased our Lord to go on discovering to him one thing better than the last; and in all that had been met with, the countries, their trees, plants, fruits and flowers, as well as their inhabitants, things had grown better and better. Everywhere there was something different. The same applies to the harbours and water. He adds that himself who saw these wonders, being struck with such admiration, much greater must be caused in one who only hears of them, and that none would believe the accounts of these things, unless they saw them.

Monday, Nov. 26th. At sunrise they weighed anchor, and set sail from the harbour of *Santa Catalina* within the low island; they proceeded along the coast with a light breeze from the Southwest, towards *Cabo del Pico* <sup>86</sup> at the Southeast, and arrived at the cape late in the afternoon, the wind having died away; they espied in the direction of Southeast by East, another cape about sixty miles distant; nearer the ship was a third, which bore Southeast by South, apparently twenty miles distant, this the Admiral named *Cabo de Campana*,<sup>87</sup> they could not reach it before night, as the wind failed them. They sailed this day thirty-two miles, which are eight leagues: in this course they saw, and marked down, nine very remarkable harbours, which the mariners affirmed to be excellent, also five large rivers were seen, the ships keeping close along the coast for the

<sup>86</sup> Punta del Mangle, or Guarico.

<sup>87</sup> Punta Vaez.

of water, which are not pestilent, like the rivers of Guinea, for, praised be our Lord, there has not as yet been one among all my crews brought upon his bed by sickness, or even afflicted with so much as a headache, excepting an old man who was troubled with the stone, a disorder which he has possessed all his life, and who recovered after two days. Please God your Highnesses may send learned men hither, who may ascertain the truth of all I describe. And as I have before spoken of a situation for a town and fortress at the Rio de Mares, where there is a fine port and a pleasant country in the neighbourhood, I repeat what I then affirmed in recommendation of that place; but it is certain that neither that situation, nor the Mar de Nuestra Señora can in any degree be compared to this, for here are undoubtedly large towns, multitudes of people, and things of great value. All these countries which I have seen, and which I hope to discover, before my return to Castile, will, in my opinion offer a vast trade to Christendom, and especially to Spain, to which they must all be subject. Your Highnesses ought not to suffer any trade to be carried on, nor a foreign foot to be set upon these shores except by catholic Christians (as the beginning and end of the present undertaking has been the increase and glory of the Christian religion) nor let any but good Christians come to these parts.' All these are the words of the Admiral.

They proceeded up the river, which they found to possess several branches, and then rowing round the harbour they saw at the mouth of the river some very graceful trees, making, as it were, a delightful park, and a very

the Admiral did not believe, and was of opinion that these people who made prisoners of the other Indians, belonged to the lordship of the Great Can.

Tuesday, Nov. 27th. At sunset last night they approached the cape which they had named Cabo de Campana, and as the sky was clear and the wind light, the Admiral thought it best not to anchor, although there were five or six excellent ports to leeward. He was spending more time than he cared to lose, because he so longed and delighted to see the beauty and luxuriance of the places where he wished to land, and he ought not to delay the fulfilment of his plans. On this account they beat up and down all night, during which time the currents carried them along five or six leagues to the Southeast. Beyond Cabo de Campana they discovered a large strait which appeared to make a division in the land, with what seemed to be an island in the middle. The wind being Southwest, the Admiral determined to put about, and examine it. On arriving at the supposed opening it was found to be merely a large bay; <sup>88</sup> at the Southeasterly extremity was a lofty, square-cut promontory, which appeared like an island. <sup>89</sup> The wind shifted to the North, and they stood about, and steered Southeast, for the purpose of making discoveries along the coast. At the foot of the cape called Cabo de Campana they found an excellent harbour <sup>90</sup> and large river; a mile beyond, another river, half a league farther, a third river; and another half a league onward, a fourth. Four additional rivers were seen within the distance of as many leagues, the last of them about twenty miles from

<sup>88</sup> Baracoa.

<sup>89</sup> Monte del Yunque.

<sup>90</sup> Puerto del Maravi.

Cabo de Campana, to the S.E. The most of these had safe entrances of great breadth and depth, and form excellent harbours for large ships, being free from sandbanks, rocks and reefs. Standing along the coast they discovered at the S.E. of the last river a large town,<sup>91</sup> which exceeded in size any they had hitherto seen; a vast multitude of people came down to the sea shore shouting loudly; they were all naked and had javelins in their hands. The Admiral desired to have some conversation with them, and ordered the sails to be lowered; they came to anchor and the boats were dispatched on shore with such preparation and order, that the Indians should neither receive any injury, nor cause any to the Spaniards. Some trifles were sent in the boats for distribution among them. Those on shore made a show of attempting to prohibit the landing of the Spaniards, but perceiving the boats fearlessly approaching the land they retired to a distance. The Christians thinking that a small number of the crew might approach them without causing any fear, three of their number advanced towards the Indians, calling out to them in the Indian language (which they had learnt in some degree from those on board) not to be afraid, notwithstanding this they took to flight, leaving not a soul behind. The three Christians proceeded to the houses, which were built of straw, after the manner of the others, but found neither inhabitants nor furniture. They returned to the ships and set sail at noon for a pleasant cape,<sup>92</sup> which they saw at the East, about eight leagues distant. Having sailed half a league in the bay, they descried toward the South a very remark-

<sup>91</sup> Baracoa.

<sup>92</sup> Punta de Maisi.

able harbour,<sup>98</sup> and some wonderfully beautiful country at the S.E., a rolling plain between the mountains, where large towns, and the smoke of many fires were seen, and the land appeared to be well cultivated. These determined the Admiral to put into the harbour above mentioned, and attempt some intercourse with the people. Though he had praised the other harbours, this he declares to be far superior to all he had yet seen, for the populousness and beauty of the country in the neighbourhood, and the fineness of the air. He speaks in terms of admiration of the beauty of the fields and the forests, among which were pines and palm-trees. The great plain before-mentioned extended to the S.E., with an undulating surface, full of hills and dales and level ground, and many streams crossing it which run down from the mountains, altogether forming the most beautiful prospect in the world. Having anchored, the Admiral jumped into the boat to go and sound the harbour, which was shaped like a stone-hammer, and at the mouth of it toward the South he found the entrance of a stream, wide enough to admit a galley; this was so situated as not to be seen before arriving close to the spot. At a distance of the length of the boat within, there were found five to eight fathoms depth of water. Proceeding up the stream he was astonished to perceive the fresh and luxuriant verdure of the trees, the clearness of the water, the variety of the birds, and the beauty of the whole prospect, and declares he was never willing to leave the place. He observed to the crew who accompanied him that a thousand tongues would not suffice to inform

<sup>98</sup> Puerto de Baracoa.



the King and Queen of what they saw there, nor his hand to write it, and that he appeared to be under the influence of enchantment. He was desirous that other persons of prudence and credit should be witnesses of them, and says he is certain their descriptions will not fall short of his. He adds these words, 'I cannot say how much profit may be drawn from here. It is indubitable, sovereign Princes, that in such countries there must be countless things of value. I am unwilling to remain long in any port, but desire to visit all the lands in this quarter, that I may give a relation of them to your Highnesses. Besides, I do not know the language; these people cannot understand me, neither I nor any of my company understand them, and the Indians I have with me are perpetually mistaking one thing in their conversation for another. I place little confidence in the Indians I have on board, as they have several times attempted to escape. Henceforth, with the permission of our Lord, I shall see as much as I can, and shall gradually come to understand better and acquire more information, having the language taught to some of our people, for I perceive that thus far the dialect is the same throughout. Thus we shall acquire a knowledge of all that is valuable here, and shall endeavour to convert to Christianity these people, which may be easily done as they are not idolators, but are without any religion. Your Highnesses may order a city and fortress to be built here, and convert the country. And I assure your Highnesses that, to my thinking, there are not under the sun better lands, considering the fertility of the soil, the temperature of the air and the abundance of fine streams

of water, which are not pestilent, like the rivers of Guinea, for, praised be our Lord, there has not as yet been one among all my crews brought upon his bed by sickness, or even afflicted with so much as a headache, excepting an old man who was troubled with the stone, a disorder which he has possessed all his life, and who recovered after two days. Please God your Highnesses may send learned men hither, who may ascertain the truth of all I describe. And as I have before spoken of a situation for a town and fortress at the Rio de Mares, where there is a fine port and a pleasant country in the neighbourhood, I repeat what I then affirmed in recommendation of that place; but it is certain that neither that situation, nor the Mar de Nuestra Señora can in any degree be compared to this, for here are undoubtedly large towns, multitudes of people, and things of great value. All these countries which I have seen, and which I hope to discover, before my return to Castile, will, in my opinion offer a vast trade to Christendom, and especially to Spain, to which they must all be subject. Your Highnesses ought not to suffer any trade to be carried on, nor a foreign foot to be set upon these shores except by catholic Christians (as the beginning and end of the present undertaking has been the increase and glory of the Christian religion) nor let any but good Christians come to these parts.' All these are the words of the Admiral.

They proceeded up the river, which they found to possess several branches, and then rowing round the harbour they saw at the mouth of the river some very graceful trees, making, as it were, a delightful park, and a very

fine canoe made of a log as large as a galley of twelve oars; it was hauled up under a shed constructed with wood and covered with palm leaves in such a manner that it was completely sheltered from the rain and sun. The Admiral declares this to be an excellent place for a town and fort on account of the advantages of the harbour, streams and soil, and the plenty of wood, and pleasantness of the country.

Wednesday, Nov. 28th. They remained in port all day on account of the rain and mist, although the wind blowing from the S.W., they might have sailed along the coast. But as the thickness of the weather would have hindered the view of the land, the Admiral thought best to remain, especially considering the danger in not being acquainted with the coast. The crews went on shore to wash their clothes, and some of them went a distance into the country; they found large villages with the houses empty, the natives having fled. They came back along another river, larger than that by which they lay at the harbour.

Thursday, Nov. 29th. As it continued to rain and the sky was completely covered with clouds, they did not set sail. Some of the Christians went to visit a town toward the N.W., and found in the houses neither inhabitants nor furniture. On the way they met with an old man who was unable to escape, him they took, assuring him of their friendly disposition, and after presenting him with some trifles, allowed him to depart. The Admiral was desirous of seeing him, in order that he might give him some clothes, and have some conversation with him, for he was much delighted with the country and judged it to be very

populous. They found a cake of wax<sup>94</sup> in one of the houses, which they preserved for the King and Queen, and the Admiral was of opinion that where wax was found there must be a thousand other valuable commodities. In one of the houses was likewise found a man's head hanging from a beam in a small covered basket; the like they found in a house in one of the other villages. The Admiral thought these were heads of the founders of the families, as the houses in which they were met with were of a very large size, and that the persons to whom they belonged were relations.<sup>95</sup>

Friday, Nov. 30th. They could not put to sea, the wind being from the E. and contrary. The Admiral sent eight men armed, with two of the Indians on board, to explore the country, and obtain some communication with the inhabitants. They came to many houses without finding within them, person or thing, the inhabitants having fled. At length they discovered four young men digging in the fields, who perceiving the Christians, took to flight, and could not be overtaken. They travelled a considerable distance and saw a great many villages; the land was very fertile and the whole under cultivation. Large streams of water were seen, in the neighbourhood of one, they saw a canoe very finely built of a single log, it was ninety-five spans in length, and capable of carrying a hundred and fifty men.

<sup>94</sup> This, according to Las Casas, must have come from Yucatan, but Ferdinand Columbus reports the finding of honey and wax on the island of Guadeloupe, in 1496.

<sup>95</sup> In this he seems to have been right, and the bones are an indication of ancestor-worship.

Saturday, Dec. 1st. The Admiral remained still in port, the wind continuing ahead with rain in abundance. At the entrance of this harbour, which he named *Puerto Santo*,<sup>96</sup> he set up a cross in the solid rock; the point where this was done, is in the southern part near the mouth, and whoever wishes to sail into the port, should keep near the northwesterly point rather than the other, the depth at the foot of each being twelve fathoms close to the shore, and free from obstructions; but at the entrance of the harbour near the southeasterly point there is a shoal which rises above the water, and so far from the shore that a vessel may pass between the point and it, in case of necessity. Round about the shoal and the point there is a depth of twelve and fifteen fathoms. Coming in, it is requisite to steer S.W.

Sunday, Dec. 2d. The wind still contrary, they could not depart. Although every night there blew a land-breeze, the Admiral states that there would be no danger of driving ashore in this harbour, in the most violent storms, by reason of the shoal at the entrance, etc. In the mouth of the river a ship's boy found some stones which seemed to contain gold, these were preserved for the King and Queen. A *lombarda*-shot from this place were large rivers.

Monday, Dec. 3d. Still detained in port by the weather. The Admiral resolved to visit a fine cape which he saw a mile distant from the harbour at the S.E. He accordingly went with the boats and some of the crew armed. At the foot of the cape he found the mouth of a pleasant river;<sup>97</sup>

<sup>96</sup> Baracoa.<sup>97</sup> Rio Boma.

they rowed to the S.E. to enter it, and found it a hundred paces wide: the depth at the mouth was a fathom, but within increased to twelve, five, four or two, and there was room enough for all the ships in Spain. Passing a branch of the stream, they proceeded to the S.E. and came to a creek or cove, in which they saw five large canoes, very handsomely wrought, like galleys, so that he says it was a pleasure to see them. At the foot of the mountain they found the land all under cultivation. The woods were very thick, and in passing through them, they came to a shed very well built and tightly covered, so that neither sun nor rain could penetrate it: under it they found a canoe made like the others, from one log, as large as a galley of seventeen oars; it was a pleasure to see such handsome work. The Admiral ascended a mountain and observed the country very level. Many productions were observed such as gourds and the like, and the fields offered a delightful prospect. Among them lay a large town; he came upon the people suddenly, and upon perceiving them, all, both men and women, immediately fled. The Indian who accompanied him called out to them not to fear, for they were friends. The Admiral caused them to be presented with hawk's bells, brass rings and strings of green and yellow glass beads, with the which they were highly delighted. Having ascertained that they possessed no gold nor any precious commodity, the Spaniards returned to their boats. The country was found very populous, but the most of the inhabitants fled through fear. The Admiral declares to the King and Queen that these people are such cowards that ten men might put ten thou-

sand of them to flight. They carry no weapons save sticks with a sharp piece of wood, hardened in the fire, on the end; these were very easily obtained from them and they bartered them all away. Arrived at the boats, two men were sent off to a place where the Admiral thought he had seen a large bee-hive. Before their return, many Indians came to the boats where the Admiral was with his crew, and one of them jumped into the river and came to the stern of the Admiral's boat where he made a long speech, nothing of which was understood, while the other Indians held up their hands to heaven from time to time, and uttered loud cries. The Admiral was of opinion that they were assuring him of the pleasure which his arrival gave them, but presently observed that the Indian on board lost countenance, turned as yellow as wax, and trembled exceedingly, entreating the Admiral by signs to leave the river, for the natives were about to kill them all. He then took a cross-bow from one of the Christians and held it out towards the Indian, and uttered a speech which the Admiral understood to be a menace of hostility against them. He also seized a sword, and drawing it from the scabbard showed it to them, using the same language, which being heard by those on shore they all took to flight. The Indian continued trembling and overpowered with fear, although a stout, well made fellow. The Admiral determined not to leave the river, but rowed for the shore toward a place where he saw many people, all of them mother-naked, and stained red, some with tufts of feathers in their heads, and all having javelins. 'I approached them,' says he, 'and gave them some pieces

of bread, demanding their javelins, which they gave me for a hawk's bell to one, a little brass ring to another and a few beads to another. In this manner they were all pacified, and came to the boats offering their articles for any thing we chose to give them in return. The sailors had killed a turtle, and the shell lay in pieces in the boat; the ship-boys purchased the javelins of the Indians with it, at the rate of a handful of them for a scale. These people are like the others I have seen, and imagine we have come from heaven. They are ready to barter any thing they possess for whatever we choose to give them, without objecting to the small value of it; and if they had spices or gold, I believe it would be the same. I saw here a handsome house of a moderate size, with two doors, as all the others are; I entered it and found a very singular contrivance in the manner of the rooms, which I cannot describe; from the ceiling hung cockle shells and other things. I took it to be a temple, and called the Indians, demanding of them by signs whether they offered up their devotions there, to which they replied in the negative, and one of them climbed up, and gave me the ornaments which were hanging about; some of them I accepted.'

Tuesday, Dec. 4th. They set sail with a light wind, and left this harbour, which received the name of Puerto Santo. At two leagues distance they saw a fine river, mentioned yesterday.<sup>98</sup> Kept along the coast, which was found, after having passed the cape, to run E.S.E. and W.N.W., to a cape which they named *Cabo Lindo*:<sup>99</sup> this is five leagues E. by S. from the one called *Cabo del Monte*, and

<sup>98</sup> Rio Boma.

<sup>99</sup> Punta del Fraile.



a league and a half from the last is a river somewhat narrow, which appears to have a safe and deep entrance. Three miles from that, they saw another river, very large and which to all appearance came from a long distance; it was about a hundred paces wide, and eight fathoms deep, at the entrance which had no bar; the water was fresh to the sea; these facts were learned by dispatching a boat to sound and examine it: the river appeared to bring as great a volume of water to the sea, as any they had seen, and probably had many towns on its banks. Beyond Cabo Lindo there was a bay of considerable extent, which would be easily entered from the E.N.E., S.E. or S.S.W.

Wednesday, Dec. 5th. All last night they beat about off Cabo Lindo, in order to examine the land which extended to the east, and at sunrise discovered another cape<sup>100</sup> in that direction, two leagues and a half distant, which having passed, they found the coast began to tend toward the south and southwest<sup>101</sup> and presently discovered a lofty and handsome cape in that direction, about seven leagues from the last. The Admiral was inclined to steer that way, but his desire to visit the island of Babeque, which according to the Indians was to the northeast, restrained him. The wind, however, blowing from the Northeast hindered him from steering that way; proceeding onward, therefore, he descried land in the southeast<sup>102</sup> which appeared to be quite a large island, and according

<sup>100</sup> Punta de los Azules.

<sup>101</sup> This is the eastern extremity of Cuba, called Punta de Maisi.

<sup>102</sup> Española (Haiti).

to the information of the Indians was very populous, and called Bohio. The inhabitants of Cuba or Juana,<sup>103</sup> and those of the other islands entertained a great dread of these people, imagining them to be man-eaters. Other surprising relations the Indians communicated by signs to the Spaniards, of which the Admiral does not avow his belief, but thinks the Indians of Bohio to be a more ingenious and artful race than the others (who are most feeble-hearted), as they were accustomed to make prisoners of them. — The wind being northeast and inclining toward the north he determined to leave Cuba or Juana, which hitherto he had taken for a continent by its size, having sailed along the coast a hundred and twenty leagues. He therefore left the shore and steered southeast by east, as the land last discovered appeared in that direction. He took this course because the wind always came round from the north to northeast, and from thence to east and southeast. It blew hard and they carried all sail, having a smooth sea, and a current favouring them, so that they sailed eight miles an hour from morning to one o'clock in the afternoon, a bare six hours; for the nights are stated to be here nearly fifteen hours long. After this, they went ten miles an hour, and by sunset had made a progress of eighty-eight miles, which are twenty-two leagues, all to the southeast. As night was coming on, the caravel Niña, being a swift sailer, was dispatched ahead to look out for a harbour; she came to the mouth of one <sup>104</sup> which resembled the bay of Cadiz, and it being dark, they sent the boat to sound it; the boat carried

<sup>103</sup> So named after Juan, son of Ferdinand and Isabella.

<sup>104</sup> St. Nicolas, in Española.

a candle-light, and before the Admiral could come up with the Niña, who was beating up and down, waiting for the boat to make her a signal to enter, the light went out. Upon this she stood off to sea, making a light for the Admiral, and coming up they related what had happened. Presently the men on board the boat again showed a light, when the Niña stood in for the land; the Admiral was not able to follow, but remained beating about all night.

Thursday, Dec. 6th. At day break he found himself four leagues from the harbour, which he named Puerto Maria, and saw a fine cape which bore south by west; to this he gave the name of *Cabo del Estrella*.<sup>105</sup> it was twenty-eight miles distant, and appeared to be the southern extremity of the island. There appeared land in the east<sup>106</sup> like an island of a moderate size, about forty miles distant. Another handsome and finely shaped headland was seen bearing east by south, at a distance of fifty-four miles, this he called *Cabo del Elefante*.<sup>107</sup> Another bore east southeast, twenty-eight miles off, which he named *Cabo de Cinquin*. A large opening or bay which seemed to be a river<sup>108</sup> was observed about twenty miles distant in the direction of southeast by east. There appeared to be between the two last mentioned capes a very wide channel<sup>109</sup> which the sailors said separated an island from the main land; this island he named *Tortuga*. The land here appeared lofty, and not mountainous but even and level like the finest arable tracts. The whole or great part of it seemed under

<sup>105</sup> This is cape St. Nicholas.

<sup>106</sup> A continuation of the coast.

<sup>107</sup> Punta Palmista.

<sup>108</sup> Puerto Escudo.

<sup>109</sup> Channel of Tortuga.

cultivation, and the plantations resembled the wheat fields in the plain of Cordova in the month of May. Many fires were seen during the night, and by day, a great number of smokes, like beacons, which to appearance were signals giving notice of some people with whom they were at war. The whole coast runs to the east.

At the hour of Vespers the Admiral entered the above-mentioned harbour, which he named *Puerto de San Nicolas*,<sup>110</sup> it being the day of that saint: he was astonished on entering, to observe the goodness and beauty of the harbour, and although he had highly praised the ports of Cuba, he declares that this is not inferior to any of them, but rather exceeds, and none of them is like it. The entrance has a width of a league and a half, where a vessel should steer S.S.E., there being, however, sufficient room to steer in any direction desired. The course continues in this manner to the S.S.E. two leagues (and the course is equally straight from the cape formed at the southern entrance), up to a promontory. Here is a fine beach with a river, and trees of a thousand sorts all loaded with fruit, which the Admiral took for spices and nutmegs, but being unripe he could not get any knowledge of them. The water in this harbour is of a surprising depth, they not being able to reach bottom at the distance of a . . .<sup>111</sup> from the shore with a lead-line of forty fathoms; up to this point they found fifteen fathoms, and a clean bottom; and thus throughout the whole harbour, from cape to cape, is a clean bottom at fifteen fathoms, a 'mere step from land.' The whole shore-line is so steep and clean that not a shoal is to

<sup>110</sup> Instead of *Puerto Maria*.

<sup>111</sup> Word omitted.

be seen, and the shore is so bold that an oar's length from it the water is five fathoms deep. In addition to the whole length of the harbour on the S.S.E. course, where there is room sufficient for a thousand carracks to sail about in, the harbour offers a recess opening<sup>112</sup> towards the N.E., for more than half a league, and preserving the same breadth throughout its whole extent, as though it had been laid out by line. The width of the creek is twenty-five paces. It is shut in after such a manner, that within it the main entrance of the harbour cannot be seen. The depth of the water is everywhere eleven fathoms, with a fine clean sand at the bottom; the shore is bold, having eight fathoms water where one may put the gangway across to the grass. Here is a fine dry air, and the shore around free from wood. The land appeared the most rocky of any they had seen; the trees small, and many similar to those of Spain, as evergreen oaks, and arbutus; the same they remarked of the herbs. This is very high ground, a level plateau, with excellent air. Since they had been in this part of the world, they had not experienced so cool a temperature of the air as they found at this place, though it could not be described as cold, except in comparison with the other islands. A beautiful plain lay opposite the entrance of the harbour, through the midst of which flowed the river mentioned above. The neighbourhood, the Admiral thought to be extremely populous, from the number and size of the canoes which were seen; some of them were as large as a galley of fifteen oars. The Indians all took to flight on perceiving the ships. Those whom the Spaniards had on

<sup>112</sup> The *carenero* or careening-place.

board grew so earnest to return to their homes that the Admiral says he had some intention of carrying them thither at his departure from this place, and that they were mistrustful of him for not taking his route that way. For this reason he declares that he put no trust in any of their representations, neither could he understand them well, nor they him. They appeared to have the greatest fear imaginable of the people of this island. The Admiral found that if he wished to obtain any communication with those on shore, it would be necessary to wait here some days, which he was unwilling to do, as he could not tell how long he should be detained, and wished to make further discoveries. He hoped in our Lord that he should be able through the medium of the Indians on board, to have some conversation with them upon his return; and 'may it please the Almighty,' says he, 'that I may find some good traffic in gold before that time.'

Friday, Dec. 7th. At daybreak, they set sail and left the port of San Nicolas with a southwesterly wind, and stood on their course two leagues to the N.E. towards a cape at the *carenero*, when a bay was seen to the S.E. and Cabo de la Estrella to the S.W. twenty-four miles distant. From thence they proceeded to the east, along the coast, about forty-eight miles to Cape Cinquin, twenty miles of which course they had gone E. by N. They found the land high and the water deep, close to the shore twenty and thirty fathoms, and a *lombarda*-shot distant, no bottom; all which was proved by actual experiment of the Admiral through the day. He remarks that if the cape above-mentioned, which projects a *lombarda*-shot into the har-

bour of San Nicholas, were cut through, it would form an island of three or four miles in circuit. The land, as before, very high, and its trees not large but such as evergreen oaks and arbutus, the country closely resembling Castile. Two leagues before arriving at Cape Cinquin, they discovered an opening like a gap in the mountain<sup>113</sup> within which was seen a very large valley, covered apparently with barley,<sup>114</sup> a sign that this valley abounded with settlements; at the back of it were lofty and extensive mountains. Arrived at Cabo de Cinquin they found Cabo de Tortuga to bear N.E., thirty-two miles distant. About a *lombarda*-shot from Cabo de Cinquin, there is a rock rising above the water, very easily noticed. At this place Cabo del Elefante bore E. by S., seventy miles distant, the land all very lofty. Six leagues onward was a large promontory,<sup>115</sup> within which they discovered extensive valleys and fields, with very high mountains, the whole country appearing like Castile. At eight miles distant they found a river, which was narrow although deep, and might easily admit a carrack, the mouth without banks or shallows. Sixteen miles further along they came to a harbour,<sup>116</sup> both broad, and of such a depth that no bottom was obtained at the entrance, and the water was fifteen fathoms deep a few feet from the shore; it extended about a mile into the land. As the sky was very cloudy and threatened rain, an unfavourable state upon a coast, especially a strange one, the Ad-

<sup>113</sup> Bahia Mosquito.

<sup>114</sup> Barley did not exist in America at the time of its discovery; perhaps Indian corn was the crop seen.

<sup>115</sup> Puerto Escudo.

<sup>116</sup> Bahia Mosquito again.

miral determined to put in here, although it was no later in the day than one o'clock, and a strong wind blew astern. This harbour he named Puerto de la Concepcion, and entering, landed near a small stream which flowed through fields and plains of wonderful beauty. They carried nets with them for fishing, and while rowing to the land, a skate similar to those of Spain, leaped into the boat; this was the first instance of their meeting with a fish which resembled those of Castile. Many of these were taken by the sailors, as well as soles, and other fish like the Castilian. Going some distance round the country they observed the soil all under cultivation, and heard the songs of the nightingale and many other Castilian birds. They met five Indians who immediately fled. A myrtle-tree was seen, and other trees and plants like those of Castile, which, in fact, the whole country and its mountains resemble.

Saturday, Dec. 8th. It rained very hard, with a strong north wind. The harbour was found secure from all winds except the north, and that can do no damage because it causes a great surf, which prevents a vessel dragging at its moorings or being pulled by the current of the river. At midnight the wind shifted to the N.E., and afterward to the E., from which quarters the harbour is well sheltered by the island of Tortuga, which lies off against it, thirty-six miles distant.<sup>117</sup>

Sunday, Dec. 9th. This day it continued to rain and the weather seemed wintry like October in Castile. No settlement had been seen, except a single house at the Port of

<sup>117</sup> So in the text, but the true distance is only eleven miles. The copyist has mistaken miles for leagues.



San Nicolas; this was a handsome one, and better constructed than those they had observed in other parts. 'This is a very large island,' says the Admiral, 'and will undoubtedly measure two hundred leagues in circuit; the land is all cultivated to high degree, and the towns are probably at a distance back in the country, the inhabitants fleeing at the approach of the strangers, carrying their property with them, and making signals by smoke about the country, as in a state of war. The harbour here is about a thousand paces or quarter of a league wide at the mouth, without either bank or shoal, but exceedingly deep to the edge of the shore: it extends within about three thousand paces, with a fine clear bottom; any ship may enter it fearlessly and anchor without the least hazard. At its head are two small streams, and opposite the mouth of the harbour, several plains the most beautiful in the world, and resembling those of Castile, except that they surpass them.' On this account the Admiral named the island *Española*.

Monday, Dec. 10th. The wind blew strong from the N.E., and they dragged their anchors with half the length of the cable, at which the Admiral wondered, and ordered the cables to be veered out. Perceiving that the weather was unfavourable for his setting sail, he dispatched on shore six men, well armed and equipped, for the purpose of penetrating into the country and obtaining some communication with the natives. They went and returned without seeing any of the inhabitants, or any dwellings save a few huts. They met with some wide paths, and places where fires had been made. The country appeared the finest in the world, and they found mastick trees in abundance, but this

was not the season for collecting it, as the gum does not concrete.

Tuesday, Dec. 11th. The wind blowing E. and N.E., they did not set sail. Directly opposite the harbour, as stated above, lies the island of Tortuga; this appears of a very large size, and the coast runs in the same direction as the island of Española, the distance between them being at the most, ten leagues,<sup>118</sup> that is to say, from Cabo de Cinquin to the extremity of Tortuga, after which the coast tends to the South. The Admiral was desirous of proceeding along the channel between these two islands, in order to take a survey of Española, which is the most beautiful thing in the world. The Indians also informed him that this was the course he must take to reach the island of Babeque, which they described as very large, with rivers, valleys, and lofty mountains. The island of Bohio, they stated, was larger than that of Juana, which the inhabitants called Cuba, and was not surrounded by water, but as nearly as could be understood from them, was a continent, and situated behind Española; they called it *Caritaba* and said it was an enormous country. The inhabitants of all these islands live in great fear of the people of *Caniba*, who must be a clever race, and the Admiral here repeats as he has done in many places, that *Caniba* means no other than the people of the Great Can, who live somewhere in this neighbourhood, and come in their vessels and make prisoners of the Indians, who not returning, their countrymen imagine their enemies have devoured them. 'Each day,' as the Admiral remarks, 'we improved in our communica-

<sup>118</sup> Error, as noted above, there are many mistakes in this section.

tions with the Indians on board, and conversed with them without such misunderstandings as formerly.' They sent on shore and found a great many mastick trees, but the gum would not harden; the Admiral thought that this might be effected by water, and observes that in the island of Chios it is gathered in March, but these countries being warmer, it might probably be done in January. Many fish like those of Castile were taken, such as dace, salmon, poor-jacks, dories, *pampanos*, skates, *corbinas* and shrimps: sardines were also seen. Vast quantities of aloe were met with on shore.

Wednesday, Dec. 12th. They were still unable to set sail, as the wind remained contrary. A large cross was set up at the entrance of the harbour, upon a beautiful spot upon the western side, 'as an indication' in the words of the Admiral, 'that your Highnesses possess the country, and in the first place for a token of Jesus Christ our Lord, and the honour of Christianity.' This being done, three sailors went into the woods to view the trees and plants and presently heard a sound of the Indians, a crowd of whom they shortly after discovered, completely naked like the rest; they pursued and called out after them, but they all took to flight. Having been directed by the Admiral to take some of the natives if possible, as he wished to show them some good offices, and dissipate their fear, thinking from the fine appearance of the country that something valuable might be obtained here, the Spaniards kept on in the pursuit, and succeeded in capturing a female, handsome, and to appearance quite young; her they brought to the ships where the Admiral conversed with

her by the interpretation of his own Indians, as their language was the same. He likewise caused her to be clothed, and presenting her with glass beads, hawk's bells and rings of brass, dismissed her home with every civility. Some of the crew were sent with her, as also three of the Indians, for the purpose of communicating with the inhabitants. The sailors who carried her ashore told the Admiral that she showed much reluctance to leave the ship, and seemed inclined to remain with the females on board, whom they had taken at Puerto de Mares, in the island of Juana or Cuba. The Indians with whom she was first in company, came in a canoe, a vessel which serves them as a caravel for sailing from place to place, and when they came to the entrance of the harbour and perceived the ships, they turned back, abandoned their canoe, and fled towards the houses, whither she now directed the Spaniards. This woman wore a bit of gold at her nose, which was an indication that it was to be found in the island.

Thursday, Dec. 13th. The three men whom the Admiral had dispatched into the country with the woman, returned at three o'clock at night, not having gone to the Indian town, by reason either of the distance, or their fear. They affirmed that the next day there would come many of the inhabitants to the ships, as they would be encouraged by the accounts which the woman must give them. The Admiral, as he was desirous of ascertaining whether there was any thing valuable here, wished to have speech with the people, on account of the beauty and fertility of the country, and wishing to do every thing for the service of the King and Queen, resolved to send again to the

town, confiding in the relation which the female must have given them of the good character of the Christians; for which purpose he selected nine persons from the crew, who were fitted for the enterprise, and dispatched them well armed, with one of his Indians. They set out, and proceeded to the town,<sup>119</sup> which they found in an extensive valley, four leagues and a half to the S.E. It was deserted, as the inhabitants, perceiving the approach of the Spaniards, had all fled inland, leaving every thing behind them. The town consisted of a thousand houses, and more than three thousand inhabitants. The Indian who accompanied the Spaniards ran after the fugitives, calling out to them not to fear, for the strangers were not from Cariba, but from heaven, and gave many fine things to those whom they met. This had such an effect upon them, that they took courage, and came in a body of above two thousand to the Spaniards, putting their hands upon their heads, which is a manifestation of great reverence and friendship; they stood trembling before them until the Spaniards by many assurances dissipated their apprehensions. The men further related that having overcome their dread, they went to their houses, and each one came bringing food for their guests; this consisted of fish, and bread made of *niames*,<sup>120</sup> which are roots resembling large radishes, cultivated throughout the country by the natives, and forming their principal subsistence; these they prepare by baking and roasting; and the bread thus made so nearly resembles chestnuts in taste, that anybody would think he was eating

<sup>119</sup> Known afterwards by the name of *Gros Morne*, near Port au Paix.

<sup>120</sup> Yams or sweet potatoes.

them. The Indian who accompanied the Spaniards understanding that the Admiral wished to obtain a parrot, told this, as they were led to suppose, to the inhabitants, who brought great numbers of them immediately to their guests, and gave them as many as they desired, without demanding any thing in return. They entreated them not to return that night, and promised them many things which they had in the mountains. While they were together with the Spaniards they espied a great multitude of people with the husband of the woman whom they had taken and entertained, this female they were carrying riding upon their shoulders, and came to return thanks to the Spaniards for the civilities which she had received from the Admiral, and the presents he had given her. These people according to the relation of the men, were the handsomest, and best disposed, of any they had yet seen. The Admiral says he knows not how they could be better disposed than those of the other islands, assuring us that he had found them of the very best disposition. As to beauty, the men stated that they exceeded the others beyond comparison, both males and females, being of a much lighter colour, and that two young females were seen as white as could be found in Spain. Moreover they affirmed that the most beautiful and excellent territories in Castile, could not equal those of this country; to which indeed, the Admiral bore testimony, both in those he had before visited, and in those of the present place, although he was informed that the land which he saw about the harbour was nothing in comparison with the valley where the town stood; to which the plain of Cordova was no more equal

than the night was to the day. The country, according to their relation, was cultivated every where, and a large and wide river <sup>121</sup> capable of watering the whole territory, passed through the valley. The trees were flourishing and full of fruit, the plants very tall and covered with flowers; the paths wide and commodious. The temperature like April in Castile; the nightingale and other birds were singing as at that season in Spain, and producing, as they said, the most delightful melody in the world. Some little birds sang sweetly at night. Crickets and frogs in abundance were heard; the fish were like the Spanish. Many mastick and aloe trees were seen, as also cotton shrubs. No gold was found, which was not surprising, they had been here so short a time.

The Admiral here ascertained the length of the day and night, and found that from sunrise to sunset there passed twenty glasses of half an hour each, although he says there may be some defect in the calculation from the glass not being turned quickly enough, or the contrary. He states further that he took an observation with the quadrant and found the latitude to be thirty-four [half-] degrees.<sup>122</sup>

Friday, Dec. 14th. They left the port of Concepcion with a land breeze, which, however, soon died away; the same they had experienced every day they remained there. Afterwards the wind sprung up from the east, and they stood to the N.N.E., which course brought them to the

<sup>121</sup> Trois Rivières.

<sup>122</sup> An error, either in writing or transcribing the journal; the true latitude is twenty degrees.

island of Tortuga. They descried a point of this island, which they named *Punta Pierna*; it was to the E.N.E. of the extremity of the island, about a dozen miles distant. Thence they discovered another point to the N.E., about sixteen miles off, this they called *Punta Lanzada*, it was forty-four miles, or eleven leagues from the extremity of the island, towards the E.N.E. Along the coast there were several extensive beaches. The whole island is high, but not mountainous, and the land offers a beautiful prospect; it is moreover populous like *Española*, and the country under such an extensive cultivation that it appears like the plain of Cordova. Finding the wind unfavourable for proceeding to the island of Baneque,<sup>123</sup> the Admiral concluded to return to Puerto de la Concepcion. Two leagues east of the harbour, was a river, which he was unable to reach.

Saturday, Dec. 15th. Left the harbour of Concepcion again, to proceed on their course; but on putting to sea, found a strong easterly wind ahead, upon which they stood for Tortuga, and arriving at the island, stood about and steered towards the river, which they saw the day before and could not reach, but were again unable to arrive there. They came to anchor half a league to leeward, at a beach with a good, clean anchorage. The Admiral went with the boats to view the river, and entering an inlet near, found it was not the mouth. Returning, he discovered it at last; it had not so much as a fathom's depth of water, and a strong current. Here he entered with the intention of visiting the settlements which the men he had sent into the country, had seen in this quarter. The end of a rope was carried

<sup>123</sup> This he has hitherto called *Babeque*.



on shore, and the boats towed up against the stream the distance of two *lombarda*-shots, not being able to proceed any farther from the velocity of the current. Some houses were seen, and the large valley where the town was situated; a river, which was the one they had entered, ran through the valley, and the Admiral declares that he never witnessed a more beautiful prospect. At the mouth of the river they met some of the inhabitants, who immediately fled. The Admiral states that these people must have been very subject to incursions from their enemies, as they displayed such a degree of fear. Wherever the Spaniards came, the inhabitants were observed to make signals by smoke, on beacons all over the country, more especially in Española and Tortuga (which also is a large island). He named this valley, *Valle del Paraíso* (Vale of Paradise), and the river, *Guadalquivir*, it being as wide as the river of that name at Cordova; the banks were pebbly, but pleasant and easy to travel.

Sunday, Dec. 16th. At midnight, set sail with a light land breeze, and put to sea. At the hour of Terce <sup>124</sup> it shifted to the East, when they beat along the shore of Española close upon the wind, and at a distance from the land, half way between Española and Tortuga, met with a canoe containing an Indian, at which the Admiral was surprised, wondering how he could keep the sea under so strong a wind. They took him with his canoe on board, and feasted him, besides presenting him with glass beads, hawk's bells and brass rings. The ships then steered to land towards a village near the shore about sixteen miles distant,

where they anchored, finding a good place near the village.<sup>125</sup> This appeared to be a new settlement; the houses being all of recent construction. The Indian went on shore with his canoe, giving a favourable account of the Spaniards to his countrymen; they were already prepossessed in their favour, from the information they had received of the inhabitants of the town which had been before visited by the six Christians. Presently there came to the shore more than five hundred people, and shortly after, their king. They assembled upon the beach, close to which the ships were anchored. Coming at first one by one, ere long they came in crowds on board, but brought nothing with them, except that a few wore bits of very fine gold at their ears and noses; these they very readily gave to the Spaniards. The Admiral ordered every civility to be shown them, 'because,' as he observes, 'these are the best and most gentle people in the world, and especially, as I hope strongly in our Lord, that your Highnesses will undertake to convert them to Christianity, and that they may become your subjects, in which light, indeed I already regard them.' They saw the king on the beach, and the natives around him, offering their respects. The Admiral sent him a present, which he received in great state. He appeared to be a youth of about twenty-one years, and was attended by an aged tutor and other counsellors who gave him their advice, and answered the questions put to them. The king himself spoke but little. One of the Indians belonging to the ships conversed with him, and informed him that the Spaniards had come from heaven, and were going to the island of

<sup>125</sup> Port au Paix.

Baneque in search of gold. He answered that this was well, and in that island there was much of the same metal. To the *alguacil*<sup>126</sup> of the Admiral who carried the present, he described the course to be taken, and informed him that in two days he might arrive there; he further added that if the Spaniards were in want of anything which his country furnished, he would give it them with much good will. The people here were all mother-naked, king as well as subjects, the females also without displaying any symptoms of bashfulness. Both sexes were handsomer than any they had hitherto seen, their colour light, and if clothed and guarded from the sun and air would be nearly as fair as the inhabitants of Spain; the country being cool and the most pleasant that tongue can describe. The land is very lofty, covered with plains and valleys, and the highest mountains could be ploughed with bullocks. No part of Castile could produce a territory comparable to this in beauty and fertility. The whole island and that of Tortuga, are covered with cultivated fields like the plains of Cordova. In these they raise *ajes*,<sup>127</sup> which are slips set in the ground, at the foot of which grow roots like carrots; they grate these to powder, knead up and make into bread of a very pleasant taste like chestnuts: the stalk is set out anew, and produces another root, and this is repeated four or five times. The largest and most excellent that had been met with anywhere (the Admiral says they are also found in Guinea) were those of this island, being of the size of a man's leg. The inhabitants here according to the statement of the Admiral, were of a stout size and courageous

<sup>126</sup> Executant officer, provost.<sup>127</sup> Yams.

temper, very different from the timid islanders of the other parts; agreeable in their intercourse, and without any religion. The trees grew with such luxuriance that their leaves were rather black than green. It was wonderfully enchanting to view the valleys, the streams of fine water, the fields of the bread root, the pastures fit for flocks of all descriptions (although they possessed none), the grounds adapted for gardens, and for everything a man could desire. In the evening the king came on board; the Admiral showed him every honour and informed him that he was a subject of the King and Queen of Castile, who were the greatest princes in the world; neither the Indians of the ship, who acted as interpreters, nor the king himself, believed this, but continued in the notion that the strangers came from heaven, where they imagined the kingdom of Castile was situated, and not upon this earth. Food of the Spaniards was given to the king, of which he ate a mouthful and gave the rest to his tutor and counsellors, and the others about him. ‘Your Highnesses may rest assured,’ says the Admiral, ‘that these countries are so extensive, so excellent and fertile, especially the island of Española, that no person is competent to describe them, and no one would believe what was said of them, without ocular proof. And your Highnesses may entertain no doubt that they are as much your own as the territory of Castile, for nothing is wanting to this purpose, but a settlement here, and orders what to perform. With the men I have with me, which are not in great number, I can traverse these islands without opposition, for I have seen three of my crew go on shore, and a whole multitude of the Indians take to

flight without offering to resist them. They are all naked, and neither possess weapons nor know anything about them. So timid are they, that a thousand of them would not oppose three of us. Thus they are very well fitted to be governed and set to work to till the land, and do whatever is necessary; they may be also taught to build houses and wear clothes, and adopt our customs.'

Monday, Dec. 17th. At night it blew hard from the E.N.E., but the sea was not much agitated in consequence, by reason of the island of Tortuga which lay off against them and afforded a shelter. They remained at anchor all day, and the sailors were sent with nets to fish. The Indians took great pleasure in their intercourse with the Spaniards, and brought them certain arrows which belonged to the people of Caniba, the *Canibals*: these were stalks of cane, pointed at the ends with large sticks, which were sharp and hardened in the fire. They were exhibited by two Indians who had lost portions of flesh from their bodies; these they informed the Admiral, the *Canibals* had eaten, which he did not believe. Some of the Spaniards were sent on shore to the town, and for strings of beads bought some pieces of gold beaten out into thin leaf. They saw a native whom the Admiral took for the governor of the district, and whom the Indians call *Cacique*; he had a plate of gold-leaf as large as the hand, which he appeared desirous of bartering; he went into his house, the others remaining in the square, and had scraps cut off the piece, which he brought out one by one and traded away; the whole disposed of, he informed them by signs that he had sent for more, which would be brought the next day. These things, says the

Admiral, with the manners of the people, their practice of communicating their advice, and their gentleness of behaviour, show them to be more ingenious and of a better understanding than the others we have seen. In the afternoon came a canoe with forty men from Tortuga, on whose arrival at land, all the Indians on shore sat down in signal of friendship, and most of those in the canoe landed. The Cacique stood up and with a speech apparently consisting of threats, sent them back to their canoe and threw water at them; also taking up stones from the beach he threw them into the sea; and after they had all with ready obedience gone into the canoe, he put a stone into the hand of the *alguacil* whom the Admiral had sent to land with the notary and others, that he might throw it at the canoe, which he declined doing. The canoe immediately returned home. The Cacique made every demonstration of favour to the Admiral, and told him that at Tortuga there was more gold than in Española, it being nearer to Baneque. The Admiral gives it as his opinion that neither in Española nor Tortuga are there mines of gold, but that it is brought from Baneque, and that these people get but little, because they have nothing to give in exchange for it, their country being so extensive that the inhabitants are not obliged to practise much labour for their subsistence, nor to procure clothing, as they go naked. He believed himself now near the spot where the gold was found, and that our Lord was about to direct him thither. He learnt that from hence to Baneque was four days' voyage, amounting perhaps, to thirty or forty leagues, which distance they might sail with a good wind in a single day.

Tuesday, Dec. 18th. They remained at the anchorage through the day, not having a wind, and because the Cacique had told them he had gold to bring. The Admiral says he did not much regard the amount of this metal which he was likely to obtain here, but wished to know whence it came, as there were no mines in the island. In the morning he ordered the ships to be dressed out with their flags and arms for a festival, in honor of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, and fired many salutes from the *lombardas*. The king of the island of Española (as the Admiral describes him) left his home, which was about five leagues off, and came to the town near the ships at the hour of Terce; there were some of the Spaniards on shore whom the Admiral had sent to ascertain whether the Indians had brought their gold. These said, that above two hundred men came with the king, four of them carrying him upon a sort of bier; he was a youth, as has been said. The Admiral being at his meal in the cabin, the king with all his attendants came to the ship. The Admiral observes to the Sovereigns, 'Your Highnesses would have been pleased to witness the honour and reverence they showed him, naked as they are. On coming on board and finding me at table in the cabin he came in the most respectful manner and sat down by me, and would not suffer me to rise, or to leave off eating. I thought he would be pleased with some of our viands, and accordingly ordered a portion to be placed before him. Upon entering the cabin he made a sign with the hand for his people to remain without, which they did with the greatest readiness and respect in the world, and all sat down upon deck, except two men of

mature age, whom I took for his counsellors and tutor; these came and sat down at his feet, and the king would take a small mouthful of the victuals and give the rest to his attendants who ate it; the same he did with the drink which was offered him, putting it to his mouth, and then passing it to the others; all this was done with great state, and very few words, which as near as I could understand what he said, were uttered in a very sensible manner, his two attendants watching his countenance, conversing with him, and answering for him with the greatest degree of veneration. The meal finished, an attendant brought me a girdle shaped like those of Castile, but of different workmanship, this he presented to me and I accepted, as well as two pieces of gold, beaten very thin, of which metal I am inclined to think they possess very little, although they are in the neighbourhood of the place where it is produced in abundance. I saw that he was pleased with the hanging over my bed, and made him a present of it, with some fine amber beads which I wore upon my neck, and some red shoes and a flask of orange-flower water; with these gifts he was wonderfully delighted, and both he and his counsellors appeared to feel much regret that we could not understand one another's language. By all I could gather from him, he informed me that if I desired anything of his, the whole island was at my service. I then sent for some beads of mine upon which I had for a pendant a gold *excelente*,<sup>128</sup> upon which the images of your Highnesses were stamped, and showed it to him, letting him know, as I had done before, that your Highnesses reigned over the

<sup>128</sup> Spanish coin.



first kingdom in the world, and that there were no where so great princes. I also exhibited to him the royal standards and the banners of the cross, which he much admired, and spoke with his counsellors respecting the great power of your Highnesses who had sent me such a distance, from heaven to these parts, without fear. Many other things passed, of which I understood nothing, save that they manifested great wonder.'

As it grew late he desired to return to land, whither the Admiral dispatched him in the boat with great honour, firing a salute of many *lombardas*. Arrived on shore he ascended his bier and went up into the island accompanied by the whole multitude of over two hundred; his son was carried behind him upon the shoulders of one of the most honourable men. Wherever the Indians met with any of the sailors, they gave them food, and showed them great respect. One of them encountered the troop accompanying the king home, and stated that he saw the presents the Admiral had given, carried before the king, each separate article by one of the principal men, as was judged from the appearance. The king's son followed his father at a fair distance with an equal train of attendants, as also a brother of the king in the same manner, except that he went on foot, being led by the arms by two honourable men. This person came to the ship after the king had left her, and the Admiral made him a few presents of goods used for barter, learning now, that the king was called in the language of the Indians *Cacique*. This day little gold was obtained, but the Admiral was given to understand by an old man, that there were many islands in the neighbourhood, at the

distance of a hundred leagues and more, as near as he could gather, where much gold was obtained — he even said one island was all made of gold; and that in some of them it was found in such plenty that the inhabitants collected and caught it with sieves, after which they melted and beat it into bars and many other shapes which were described by signs. The old man pointed out the direction in which these countries lay, and the Admiral determined to proceed thither. He remarks that if this person had not been one of the principal men of the king, he should have taken and carried him along with him, or had he understood his language would have entreated him to that effect, and thinks as he was so well pleased with the Spaniards, that he would very willingly have accompanied them; nevertheless, he decided to leave him, as he considered these people to belong to the sovereigns of Castile and therefore ought not to be oppressed. A lofty cross was set up in the square or centre of the village, in which work the Indians assisted much, and repeated, as the Admiral says, prayers and adorations, from which circumstance he hopes in our Lord that these islands will all become Christian.

Wednesday, Dec. 19th. They set sail at night to leave the gulf formed by the island of Tortuga and Española. Upon the approach of day the wind shifted to the E., for which reason they were unable through the day to get out from between the islands; night coming on they found it impossible to reach a harbour<sup>129</sup> they saw near. In the neighbourhood of that place they espied four capes, and a bay and river, also another large bay<sup>130</sup> where there was

<sup>129</sup> Puerto de la Granja.

<sup>130</sup> Port Margot.

a village, in the rear of which they saw a valley among several very high mountains; these mountains were covered with trees, which the Admiral judged to be pines. At the back of the capes which he called *Los dos Hermanos*, there was a mountain very large and high, which runs from N.E. to S.W. E.S.E. from another cape named *Cabo de Torres*<sup>181</sup> there was a little isle which he called *Santo Tomás*, the next day being the anniversary of Saint Thomas. He judged that this whole country abounded in capes and excellent harbours, from what he could observe at sea. West of the isle abovementioned, was a cape running far into the sea, lofty in some parts and in others low, from this circumstance he named it *Cabo alto y bajo*.<sup>182</sup> Seventy miles E. by S. from *Camina de Torres* was a mountain loftier than any other which extended into the sea; at a distance it appeared like an island, on account of a gap towards the land; he called it *Monte Caribata*, as the district around was named *Caribata*; it was a beautiful height without clouds or snow, but covered with flourishing trees. The weather here, with respect to the air and temperature was like March in Castile, and the trees and herbs as in May in that country. The nights were fourteen hours long.

Thursday, Dec. 20th. At sunset this day they entered a harbour<sup>183</sup> between the island of St. Thomas and Cape Caribata; here they anchored. The harbour was found a very good one, and capacious enough to hold all the ships in christendom. The entrance appears impracticable from

<sup>181</sup> Punta de Limbé.

<sup>183</sup> Bahía de Acúl.

<sup>182</sup> Point and Isle Margot.

without, to those who have not been inside it on account of several ledges of rocks which run from the mountain nearly to the island; these are scattered about in an irregular manner, some near the land and others off at sea, which renders it necessary to take great care in sailing in; the channels are very wide and easy, likewise deep, having seven fathoms water, and within the rocks twelve fathoms. A ship might lie here with any sort of mooring, and be safe from all winds. Near the mouth of the harbour was a channel <sup>184</sup> at the west of a little sandy islet, which was overgrown with trees, and at the foot of which were seven fathoms water: but there are many shoals in that neighbourhood, and it is necessary to keep one's eyes open till one has entered the harbour; inside, it is safe from all the storms which blow. From this place appeared a wide and cultivated valley which descended to the sea from the S.E., and was totally shut in by exceedingly tall mountains which seemed to rise to heaven; these presented the most delightful view, being covered with luxuriant trees. No doubt there are mountains here loftier than the island of Teneriffe which is held to be the highest in the world. Here is another isle, <sup>185</sup> a league from that of St. Thomas, and within it another, all having fine harbours, but where it is necessary to look out for the shoals. Villages were seen, and smokes made by the inhabitants.

Friday, Dec. 21st. The Admiral went with the boats to examine the harbour, and after having surveyed it declares

<sup>184</sup> The manuscript has *cañal*; Navarrete's reading, *canal*, is now followed in the translation, while the 1827 edition adopted Las Casas' conjecture, *cañaveral*, "a plantation of canes."

<sup>185</sup> Isla de Ratas.

that it is equalled by none which he has seen elsewhere. He excuses himself, saying that he has been so abundant in his praises of the others, that he has nothing left to say for this, and adds that he fears to be taken for an extravagant exaggerator of the truth, but is encouraged by the reflexion that he has in company, mariners of experience who will confirm his account. He repeats that the commendations he has bestowed upon the other ports are true, and the superiority he has assigned this, he affirms to be true likewise, adding 'I have followed the seas for twenty-three years, without being on shore any space of time worth accounting, and have seen all the East and West, and been to the North where England is situated, and to Guinea, but in none of these countries are to be found ports of such excellence . . .<sup>136</sup> as I go making discoveries they show themselves better and better, as I find by carefully examining my journal; and I again affirm that this is superior to them all, and large enough to contain all the ships in the world, and so well sheltered that a ship might ride with safety, although moored with the rottenest rope in the world.' From the entrance to the bottom of the harbour is a distance of five leagues.<sup>137</sup> Fields were seen under cultivation, indeed this was the case everywhere. Two men were dispatched from the boats, and ordered to ascend a height and look out after the villages of the inhabitants, as none were seen from the sea, although it was judged there were some in the neighbourhood, by a canoe with Indians having come last night about ten o'clock, to gaze at the ships; these men the Admiral presented with some trifles which

<sup>136</sup> Gap of a line and a half.<sup>137</sup> Error, five *miles*.

pleased them greatly. The two Spaniards returned, informing that they had discovered a town at a little distance from the sea; the Admiral ordered the boats to row that way, and presently espied several Indians coming down to the shore; they seemed to be fearful of the Spaniards, and the Admiral directed the boats to be stopped and the Indians on board to speak to those on land and tell them they were friends, upon which the natives came close to the water's edge and the boats proceeded near to land; the inhabitants now banished all their fears and came down in such numbers as to cover the beach, making a thousand civilities to the Spaniards, men, women, and children. They ran here and there bringing bread made of *niames*, which they name *ajes*, this was very white and good; they also brought water in calabashes and earthen vessels, shaped like the pitchers of Castile. Whatever thing they were in possession of, and knew the Spaniards wanted, they offered with great pleasure and the utmost liberality. The Admiral remarks, 'It cannot be said that they were liberal with gifts only because their intrinsic worth was small; a piece of gold was offered with as willing readiness as a calabash of water, and it is easy to perceive when a thing is given with a good will.' These are his own words. 'These people have neither staves, javelins nor any other weapons, and this I have remarked of all the inhabitants of this island, which appears to me to be very large. They are all as naked as they were born, both men and women, whereas in Juana, and the other islands the females wear a small covering of cotton over the parts of nature, like the cod-piece of a man's trousers — especially those above a dozen years;

but neither old nor young practise it here. In other places we have found the inhabitants anxious to conceal their women from us, but here they display no such jealousy. The females at this place possess fine shapes, and were the first to give thanks to heaven upon our arrival, and bring us offerings, especially bread of *ajes*, nutty stuff <sup>138</sup> and five or six sorts of fruits.' These last the Admiral caused to be preserved for the King and Queen. The same treatment they had received from the women in other parts before the men took care to keep them out of sight. The Admiral gave strict orders that the utmost attention should be paid, not to give offence to the natives in anything, and that no article should be taken from them without his permission; in this manner they were paid for everything they gave the Spaniards. The Admiral remarks that he believes no one ever met with a people of such a liberal and generous disposition, which was exercised to such a degree that they were ready to rob themselves of every article of property to oblige their guests, flocking to them with offerings wherever they arrived. He sent six of his men to examine the town which had been seen, to these the Indians showed every honour they could invent, and presented such things as they had, not doubting in the least that the Admiral and all his crew had come from heaven, which also the Indians on board still continued to think, notwithstanding what the Spaniards had told them. The men being gone to the town, there came several canoes from a sovereign in the neighbourhood, to request the Admiral on leaving this place to visit his town. (*Canoe* is the name for the boats

<sup>138</sup> Probably Indian corn.

in which they navigate, some being large and some small.) The Admiral perceiving that the village of this chief was on his route, situated on a headland, where there were great crowds of people waiting for him, was proceeding thither, but before he could start there came down to the shore immense multitudes, men, women and children crying out for him not to leave them, but to remain there. The ambassadors of the prince abovementioned, were all this time waiting with their canoes, lest he should go away without complying with their invitation. The Admiral then set off, and arriving near the place where the prince was waiting to receive him, this sovereign ordered all his people to seat themselves upon the ground, he then dispatched men with provisions to the boats; seeing that the Spaniards accepted these, the greater part of the Indians ran off to the town, which was probably near, and came back, bringing more, along with parrots and other things, which they offered with surprising liberality. Although they demanded nothing in return, the Admiral gave them glass beads, hawk's bells, and brass rings, as he thought it but just that payment should be made them, and in particular as he says, because he already looked upon them as Christians, and more the subjects of the King and Queen, than the people of Castile. He adds that nothing is wanting but to know their language and give them orders, as they will perform everything commanded them without making the least opposition. He then left the place to return to the ships, the Indians all calling out, men, women and children, and entreating him to remain among them. Several canoes full of men followed the boats to the ships,



these the Admiral treated with much civility and gave them food and other presents. Great numbers came from the shore swimming about the ship, which was above half a league from the land. While the Admiral was upon his visit there came another prince from the westerly part of the island, and not finding him, he returned. The Admiral sent some men to visit and obtain information from him; these he received very graciously, and conducted toward his town where he intended to give them some large pieces of gold; they went along with him till they came to a wide river, which the Indians passed by swimming, but the Christians being unable to cross it, returned back. All this neighbourhood abounds in mountains so lofty that they seem to reach to the skies; the Peak of Teneriffe is nothing either for height or beauty. These are all covered with wood and vegetation in a delightful manner, and enclose among them many beautiful plains. At the South of this harbour is a plain so extensive that the eye cannot reach the end, it is probably fifteen or twenty leagues in extent, without the interruption of a single eminence; it contains a river and is inhabited and cultivated throughout, being at present as green and flourishing, as the fields in Castile in May or June, although the nights are here fourteen hours long, and this country so far to the North. The harbour here is well sheltered from every wind that can blow, being deep and well shut in, and the shores well peopled by a good, gentle race unarmed and harmless. A ship may also lie here without any fear that other ships will come and attack her during the night; for although the entrance has a width of more than two leagues, it is confined by a couple

of rocky ledges nearly on a level with the water, leaving a very narrow passage which seems almost the work of art. In the mouth of the harbour there are seven fathoms depth of water, this continues to a level islet which has a beach and is covered with trees. The entrance is to the West, where a ship may sail in without fear, coming close to the rock. Towards the N.W. are three islands and a large river, a league from the cape that borders this harbour. This being St. Thomas's day, the Admiral named the harbour *Puerto de la Mar de Santo Tomás* (*Port of the Sea of St. Thomas*),<sup>189</sup> calling it a sea, from its size.

Saturday, Dec. 22d. At daybreak they set sail to go in search of the islands where, as the Indians told them, there was much gold, and in some of them more gold than earth; but found the weather unfavourable and returned to their anchorage, when the boat was dispatched with nets for fishing. The sovereign of the country<sup>140</sup> who resided in the neighbourhood sent a large canoe full of men, with one of his principal attendants requesting the Admiral to come with the ships to his territory, promising him anything he had. He sent by this messenger a girdle to which was attached instead of a pouch, a mask having the nose, tongue, and two large ears of beaten gold.<sup>141</sup> The Admiral remarks that the generosity of these people is such that they give as much as they are asked for, with the best will in the world, believing that the asking confers a great favour

<sup>189</sup> Bay of Acúl.

<sup>140</sup> This was Guacanagari, sovereign of Marien, where Columbus built a fort and left a party of men at his return to Spain.

<sup>141</sup> The belt itself was made of white fish-bones, intermingled with a few red ones, sewn together with cotton thread.

upon them. The Indians in the canoe, meeting the boat, gave the girdle to a ship's boy, and proceeded on board the ship with their embassy. A considerable part of the day passed before they could be understood, the Indians on board not comprehending them, as their language was somewhat different from that of the others in the words for things; finally they made out to express themselves by signs, and made known their invitation. The Admiral determined to accept it, and came to a resolution to sail the next day, which was Sunday, although he was not accustomed to put to sea on that day; this arose from devotion and not from any superstitious scruples. Besides, entertaining a hope that these people, by the willingness they manifested, would become Christians, and subjects of Castile, and already looking upon them in that light, he was desirous of doing every thing to oblige them. Before quitting this place he sent six of his men to a very large town, three leagues to the West, the prince of that place having visited the Admiral the preceding day and told him that he had several pieces of gold. With these men he sent his secretary, whom he charged to take care that the Spaniards did nothing wrong to the Indians, for these were so liberal, and the Spaniards so immeasurably greedy, that they were not satisfied with receiving the most valuable of what the inhabitants possessed, in exchange for a leather thong, a bit of glass or earthenware, or other worthless trifle, and sometimes for nothing at all, which, however, the Admiral had always prohibited. Although the articles which the Indians offered were of little value, except the gold, yet the Admiral considering the readiness with which they

started with them, as giving a piece of gold for half a dozen rings of glass beads, ordered that nothing should be taken from them without paying for it. The Spaniards arriving at the town, the prince took the secretary by the hand, and led him, accompanied by a great multitude of people, to his house, where victuals were set before the Spaniards, and large quantities of cotton cloth and balls of yarn brought them. Late in the evening the Spaniards returned, the prince presenting them with three very fat geese and some bits of gold; a great number of the Indians accompanied them back, and insisted upon carrying their goods for them across the rivers and miry places. The Admiral made the prince some presents, at which he and all his people showed the greatest pleasure, and thought themselves happy in gazing upon the Spaniards, whom they believed to have come from heaven. This day more than a hundred and twenty canoes came to the ships, all filled with people, and every one bringing something, in particular bread, fish, and water in earthen pitchers, as also seeds of many useful species. Of one, they put a grain in a cup of water and drink it. The Indians on board the ships affirmed that it was very wholesome.

Sunday, Dec. 23d. The want of wind compelled them to remain here still, and the Admiral dispatched the three messengers, who were waiting, in the boats, with his secretary and others, to the prince from whom he had received the invitation the day before. While they were gone he sent two of his Indians to visit the towns in the neighbourhood, these returned bringing a prince of the country with them, and the information that gold was to be had

in that island of Española in as great plenty as could be desired, the people coming thither from other parts to obtain it. More persons arrived who confirmed this account, and showed the manner of collecting it; this the Admiral understood with difficulty, but still held it for certain that the metal must exist in abundance in these parts, where on finding the spot it might be got for very little, but otherwise not at all. He remarks that he is convinced of its plenty by having in the three days he has been here, received many large pieces, and cannot believe it is brought hither from other places. 'Our Lord, in whose hands are all things, be my help, and order every thing for his service.' These are the Admiral's words: He says he believed that more than a thousand of the inhabitants had visited the ships, every one bringing something; their custom was on arriving within half a cross-bow shot, to stand up in their canoes holding out their offerings in their hands, and exclaiming 'Take! Take!' Besides these there came above five hundred swimming, for want of canoes, the ships being anchored near a league from the shore. Five chiefs, the sons of chiefs with all their families, wives and children, came among the rest to visit the Spaniards, to all of whom the Admiral made presents, esteeming every thing given them well bestowed. 'Our Lord in his mercy,' says he, 'direct me where I may find the gold, I mean the mine, as I have many here who profess to be acquainted with it.' At night the boats returned and informed that they had gone a great distance, and at the mountain of Caribatan had met with canoes full of people, coming from the place where the Spaniards were going, to visit the Admiral (who thought

at if he stayed in that port over Christmas, the entire population of that island, which he already judged to be larger than England, would come to see them). These canoes turned back and accompanied the Spaniards to the town,<sup>142</sup> which they found the largest and most regular with respect to the streets, of any that had been seen: it was situated nearly three leagues to the southeast of *Punta Santa*.<sup>143</sup> The canoes rowing faster than the boats, slipped ahead and carried the intelligence of their arrival to the Cacique, as they called him. Hitherto the Admiral had been unable to learn whether this was the name of a king or of his governor. They have another name for their chief people, which is *Nitayno*; <sup>144</sup> whether this signified governor, nobleman, or judge, could not be ascertained. The Cacique came out to meet the Spaniards in the square, which was well-swept, like all the rest of the village, a place of more than two thousand inhabitants. The king showed them great honour, and every one of the populace brought them something to eat and drink. Afterwards the king gave each man a portion of such cotton cloth as the women wear, adding some parrots and pieces of gold for the Admiral; the people also gave the Spaniards cotton cloths and other things, receiving whatever trifles were offered them in return, which they valued as highly as if they esteemed them relics. In the afternoon when they wished to return, the king entreated them to stay till morning, and all the people joined in the solicitation. Finding

<sup>142</sup> Guarico.

<sup>143</sup> San Honorato.

<sup>144</sup> Nitayno was a grandee next in rank to the king. — Las Casas.

them determined to set out, a great number accompanied them, carrying for them upon their shoulders the articles which the Cacique and others had given them; they thus attended them to the boats, which were left at the mouth of the river.

Monday, Dec. 24th. Before sunrise they weighed anchor, and put to sea with a land breeze. Among the Indians who came on board yesterday, and informed them there was gold in the island, naming the places where it was found, there was one more forthcoming, who seemed to display an uncommon degree of liking for the Spaniards or spoke more willingly; him the Admiral caressed, and prevailed upon to go along with him, and direct the way to the gold mines. This man was accompanied by another, his companion or relation, and both these, among other places they spoke of, where the gold was obtained, named Cipango which they called *Civao*, and said it was very far to the East,<sup>145</sup> possessing vast quantities of gold, and that the Cacique of the country had his banners made of plates of that metal. The Admiral in this place says, ‘Your Highnesses may be assured that there is not upon earth a better or gentler people, at which you may rejoice, for they will easily become Christians and learn our customs. A finer country or people cannot exist, and the territory is so extensive and the people so numerous, that I know not how to give a description of them, as I have spoken so highly of the people and country of Juana which the inhabitants call Cuba. But there is a difference between these two countries as great as between day and night. I think no one who

<sup>145</sup> Part of the same island of Española.

has seen these parts, can say less in their commendation than I have said. I repeat that it is a matter of wonder to see the things we have met with, and the multitudes of people in this island, which I call Española, and the Indians Bohio; they are singularly pleasant in their intercourse and conversation with us, and not like the others, who when they speak appear to be uttering menaces; their shapes are fine, both men and women, and their colour not black, although they paint themselves, the most of them red, others of a black hue, and others of still different colours, all which, I understand, is done to keep the sun from injuring them. The houses and towns are very handsome, and the inhabitants live in each settlement under the rule of a sovereign or judge, to whom they pay implicit obedience. These magistrates are persons of excellent manners, and great reserve, and give their orders by a sign with the hand, which is understood by all with surprising quickness.

In order to enter this port, called the Sea of St. Thomas,<sup>146</sup> it is necessary to stand a good league for a small level island at the entrance, which was named *La Amiga*, and coming within a stone's throw, to pass from the west to the eastward of the island, keeping close to the shore, as a large reef comes out from the west, which extends a *lombara*-shot towards the island, while there are also about three shoals farther out to sea; the shallowest parts of the channel have seven fathoms, with a gravelly bottom, and within is room sufficient for all the ships in the world, where they may lie without moorings. There are other

<sup>146</sup> Bahía de Acúl.



large shoals and a reef to the east, extending towards the island La Amiga, and far into the sea, coming two leagues towards the cape; but among these there appeared a channel two *lombarda*-shots from La Amiga, and at the foot of Mount Caribatan, a spacious and excellent harbour.<sup>147</sup>

Tuesday, Dec. 25th. Christmas. Last night they kept along the coast with a light wind, from the Sea of St. Thomas to the headland named Punta Santa, and at the end of the first watch, about eleven o'clock, being off this point about a league distant, the Admiral laid down to sleep, having taken no rest for two days and a night past. As the sea was calm, the man at the helm left his place to a boy, and went off to sleep likewise, contrary to the express orders of the Admiral, who had throughout the voyage, forbidden, in calm or storm, the helm to be intrusted to a boy. The Admiral was free from any dread of rocks or shoals, as the Sunday before, when he sent the boats to the king, they had passed three leagues and a half to the east of Punta Santa, and the sailors had surveyed the whole coast and its shoals for full three leagues beyond that point to the E.S.E., and ascertained where the ships might pass, a thing never done before in the whole voyage. But as it pleased our Lord, at midnight, it being a dead calm, and the sea perfectly motionless, as in a cup, the whole crew, seeing the Admiral had retired, went off to sleep, leaving the ship in the care of the boy abovementioned, when the current carried her toward the shoals in the neighbourhood, upon which she struck. Although it was night these shoals might have been heard and seen from a long league

listant, but the ship struck so gently that it was scarcely felt. The boy hearing the roar of the sea, and feeling the helm beating, cried out, at which the Admiral awoke, and sprang upon deck before any of the sailors perceived that they had run aground; presently the master, whose watch it was, came up, and the Admiral ordered him and others who quickly made their appearance, to hoist out the boat and carry an anchor astern; the boat being hoisted out, the master and many others went into her, as the Admiral supposed to fulfil the order. Instead, their one aim was to escape to the caravel, which was about half a league to windward. Those on board, however, with great propriety and justice refused to receive them, and sent them back, dispatching also their own boat, which arrived first at the ship. Meantime the Admiral finding his men deserting him, and the ship down upon her side, with the water ebbing away, saw no other remedy but to cut away the mast, and throw overboard everything they could spare, hoping that this would lighten and set her afloat, but in spite of all, the water continued to ebb, and the ship to lie down towards the sea, which fortunately continued smooth, and presently she opened between the ribs. The Admiral proceeded to the caravel to dispose of his crew, and as a slight breeze blew from the land, and much of the night remained, they lay to till day, not knowing how far the shoals extended; at day break he proceeded inside of the shoal to the ship, having first sent the boat to land with Diego de Arana, of Cordova, *alguazil* of the fleet, and Pedro Gutierrez, Page of the Royal Wardrobe, to carry the news of his misfortune to the king, who had sent him the invi-

tation the Saturday before, and whose residence was about a league and a half beyond the shoal where the ship lay. This person, as they stated, upon hearing the information, shed tears, and dispatched all the people of the town with large canoes to unload the ship; with their assistance the decks were cleared in a very short time, so great was the diligence of the king and his men. He, with his brothers and relations, came and took every care both at the ship and on shore, watching over the goods that were brought to land, and carefully preserving them. From time to time he sent his relations to the Admiral, weeping and consoling him, and entreating him not to be afflicted at his loss, for he would give him all he had. The Admiral here observes to the King and Queen, that in no part of Castile would more strict care have been taken of his goods; not even a leather thong was lost. The king had them placed near the houses, several of which he ordered to be cleared for the purpose of stowing the goods. Here a guard was set over them who watched throughout the night. 'The people as well as the king shed tears in abundance,' says the Admiral. 'They are a very loving race, and without covetousness; they are adapted to any use, and I declare to your Highnesses that there is not a better country nor a better people in the world than these. They love their neighbours as they do themselves, and their language is the smoothest and sweetest in the world, being always uttered with smiles. They all, both men and women, go totally naked, but your Highnesses may be assured that they possess many commendable customs; their king commands great reverence, and everything is practised with such counte-

nance that it is highly pleasing to witness it. They have great memories and curiosity, and are very eager in their inquiries as to the nature and use of all they see.'

Wednesday, Dec. 26th. At sunrise the king of the country visited the Admiral on board the caravel Niña, and with tears in his eyes, entreated him not to indulge in any grief, for he would give him all he had; that he had already assigned the Spaniards on shore two large houses, and if necessary, would grant others, and as many canoes and men as could be used in bringing the goods and crew to land, which, in fact, he had done the day before, without the smallest trifle being purloined, 'so honest and free from covetousness are they,' says the Admiral, 'and their king pre-eminent in virtue.' While the Admiral was conversing with him, a canoe arrived from another place, with Indians bringing pieces of gold, which they wanted to exchange for a hawk's bell, these being held in special value among them; before the canoe reached the vessel, the Indians called out, showing the gold, and crying *chuq, chuq*,<sup>148</sup> for the hawk's bells, and seemed ready to go mad after them; the other canoes setting off, they called requesting the Admiral to preserve a hawk's bell for them till the next day, when they would bring him in return four pieces of gold as big as his hand. This intelligence gave him great joy, and there presently came a sailor from the land and informed the Admiral that the Spaniards were carrying on a great traffic with the Indians, purchasing bits of gold worth more than two *castellanos*, for a thong of leather, and that this was nothing to what it would be

<sup>148</sup> Take, take.

within a month. The king was much rejoiced to see the Admiral in good spirits, and discovering that he was anxious to obtain much gold, he informed him by signs that he knew where, in that neighbourhood, a great deal of it might be had, and that the Admiral might be of good cheer, for he would give him as much as he wanted. He gave him a further account of it, and told him it existed in Cipango, which they called *Civao*, in such abundance that it was held in no esteem. It was understood in the same way, that it was brought hither from that place, although in the island of Española (which they call Bohio), and in the district of Caribata there were also great quantities. The king took a meal with the Admiral on board the caravel, and then went on shore accompanied by the Admiral, whom he treated with every honour, feasting him with several sorts of *ajes*, shrimps, game and other viands, with bread which they call *cazavi*.<sup>149</sup> Afterwards he conducted him into an arbour near his house, where they were attended by more than a thousand persons, all naked. The king had on a shirt and a pair of gloves, which he had received from the Admiral, these last delighted him more than anything else that he was given. In his manner of taking food he showed a decency and neatness well worthy of his rank; after finishing his repast, at which he continued long, certain herbs were brought him, with which he rubbed his hands for a considerable time, which was done as the Admiral thought, to soften them; water was then fetched him for washing. The meal completed, he went down to the shore with the Admiral, who sent for a Turkish bow

and some arrows, these he gave to one of the crew who was expert in their use, and the exhibition of them much astonished the king, who knew nothing of weapons, his people neither using nor possessing them, although some discourse had been held here, about the people of *Caniba* whom they call *Caribs*, these, they stated, were accustomed to come and attack them with bows and arrows; it was ascertained that these last were not headed with iron, for neither iron nor steel are known in these parts, nor any other metal, except gold and copper; the Admiral saw little even of the copper. The king was then given to understand by signs that the sovereigns of Castile would send people to fight against the Caribs, and bring them all prisoners with their hands tied. By order of the Admiral, a *lombarda* and a musket were fired, and the effect and penetrating power of their shot struck the king with new wonder. When his people heard the shots, they all fell upon the ground. Afterwards a large mask was brought, with great pieces of gold, at the ears, eyes, and other places; this the king gave the Admiral, along with other jewels of the same metal, which he placed upon his head and neck; many presents were made to the other Spaniards. All these things had a great effect upon the Admiral in assuaging his grief for the loss of the ship, and he began to be convinced that our Lord had permitted the shipwreck in order that he might choose this place for a settlement. 'And to this end,' says he, 'so many favourable things offered, that it cannot be called a disaster, but a great piece of good fortune, for if we had not run aground, we should have kept off without anchoring here, the place

being in a large bay<sup>150</sup> withinside of two or three shoals. Neither should I otherwise have been induced to leave any men in these parts during the voyage, nor if I had, could I have spared them the proper provisions and materials, nor so well supplied and arranged their fortification. Many of my crew have indeed solicited me for permission to remain, and I have today ordered the construction of a fort, with a tower and ditch, all to be well built, not that I deem such a fortification necessary as a defence against the inhabitants, as I have already stated that with my present crew I could subjugate the whole island, which I believe to be larger than the kingdom of Portugal, and twice as populous, though the people are naked, unarmed and incurable cowards but that I judge it proper, as the territory is at such a distance from our country, and that the natives may understand the genius of the people of your Highnesses, and what they are able to perform, so that they may be held in obedience by fear as well as love. For this purpose I have directed that there shall be provided a store of timber for the construction of the fort, with provision of bread and wine for more than a year, seed for planting, the long-boat of the ship, a calker, a carpenter, a gunner, a cooper, and many other persons, among the number of those who have earnestly desired to serve your Highnesses and oblige me by remaining here, and searching for the gold mine. To the undertaking which I have mentioned, things seem to have concurred very opportunely, in particular the ship's running aground in such a manner that it was not perceived

ill she had stuck fast, and this at a time when there was neither wave nor wind.' The Admiral goes on to relate many other things by way of showing that it was a piece of good fortune, and the determined will of God that the ship should be wrecked there, that the Spaniards might remain, for as he states, had it not been for the treacherous conduct of the master and crew (who were most or all of them his countrymen),<sup>151</sup> in not carrying the anchor astern to haul the ship off, as they were ordered, she would not have been wrecked, and thereby they should have failed of the knowledge of the country which they obtained during the stay, by the men whom he intended to leave there. His custom was to go on making discoveries, and not to stay in any one place above a day, unless compelled by the wind, as his ship was a dull sailer, and unfit for the purpose of discovery. He lays the blame of this upon the people of Palos, in not having complied with their agreement to furnish the King and Queen with suitable vessels for the expedition.<sup>152</sup> The Admiral con-

<sup>151</sup> *I.e.*, Castilians; there were even English and Irish members of the crew.

<sup>152</sup> *Requisition upon the inhabitants of Palos for two of the vessels composing the fleet:—*

Don Ferdinand and Dona Isabel, by the grace of God, King and Queen of Castile, Leon, Arragon &c. &c. to you Diego Rodriguez Prieto, and to all other persons inhabitants of the town of Palos, greeting. You are well aware that in consequence of some offence which we received at your hands, you were condemned by our council to render us the service of two caravels armed at your own expense for the space of twelve months, whenever and wherever it should be our pleasure to demand the same, this service to be rendered under certain penalties, as stated more at large in the sentence given against you.

And inasmuch as we have ordered Christopher Columbus to proceed with a fleet of three caravels, as our Captain, to certain parts of the ocean



cludes by observing that every piece of the ship was saved, there not being lost so much as a thong, board, or nail, she being as complete as when she first sailed, except what was caused by cutting her to get out the casks and merchandise; all these were carried on shore and well secured, as above said. He adds that he hopes to find at his intended return from Castile, a ton of gold collected by them in trading with the natives, and that they will have succeeded in discovering the mine and the spices, and all these in such abundance that before three years the King and Queen may undertake and prepare for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. 'For I have before protested to your Highnesses,' says he, 'that the profits of this enterprise shall be employed in the conquest of Jerusalem, at which your Highnesses smiled and said you were pleased, and had the same inclination.' These are his own words.

Thursday, Dec. 27th. At sunrise the king came on board, and told the Admiral that he had sent for gold, and wished he could cover him all over with it before his departure, or rather, that he would not depart at all. He took a meal with the Admiral in company with a brother

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upon a matter connected with our service, and we desire that the two caravels, the service of which you owe us as abovesaid, should be placed at his disposal — we hereby order that within ten days from the sight of this letter, without delay or waiting for any further directions, you have in complete readiness the said two armed caravels for the service of the above-mentioned Christopher Columbus in the enterprise upon which we have dispatched him, and that they be placed at his command from that time forth; and for the crews of the said two caravels we order him to pay you forthwith four months' wages at the same rate with which the crew of the other caravel is paid, being the common allowance for ships of war. . . .

and another near relation, who stated that they wished to go to Castile with him. While they were on board, there arrived accounts that the caravel *Pinta* was in a cove at the end of the island; the Cacique dispatched a canoe thither, in which the Admiral ordered a Spaniard to embark. The Cacique displayed a degree of affection towards the Admiral that appeared wonderful. The utmost diligence was exerted in preparing for their return to Castile.

Friday, Dec. 28th. In order to see to and hurry on the construction of the fort, the Admiral went on shore. It seemed that the king espied him as he was embarking, for he entered his house in haste and hid himself, while he sent one of his brothers to receive him. The Admiral was conducted to one of the dwellings given to the Spaniards, which was the largest and best in the place. Here there was prepared a *daïs* made of the inner bark of the palm tree, upon which they caused the Admiral to sit, the king's brother then sent an attendant informing him that the Admiral was there, as if he were ignorant of it; the Admiral imagined that this was done to show him so much the more honour. The attendant having delivered his message, the king ran to the Admiral, carrying a great plate of soft gold in his hand, which he placed about his neck. He remained with him till the afternoon, considering what was to be done.

Saturday, Dec. 29th. At sunrise there came on board the caravel a nephew of the king, quite a youth, but a person of good understanding and courage; and as the Admiral's constant object was to find the place where the gold was

produced, he made it a practice to question every one about it by signs, as they could converse in this manner. This young man informed him that at the distance of four days' voyage to the east, was an isle called *Guarionex*, and others called *Macorix*, *Mayonic*, *Fuma*, *Cibao*, and *Coroay*,<sup>153</sup> and that they contained abundance of gold. The names of these places the Admiral wrote down, and it afterwards came to the knowledge of the king's brother, that the youth had given this information, whereupon some altercation ensued between them, as near as the Admiral could make out. He had at other times understood that the king was exerting himself to prevent his learning where the gold was produced, lest he should go thither after it and therefore do his bartering and buying elsewhere. 'But there is such a quantity of it, and in so many places in the island of Española,' says the Admiral, 'that it is a matter of wonder.' At night the king sent him a great golden mask, begging for a wash-basin and ewer; the Admiral supposed that he wished for these, to have others made like them. The request was complied with.

Sunday, Dec. 30th. The Admiral went to dine on shore, and found that there had arrived five kings, who were subject to Guacanagari, the king above-mentioned. All these wore their crowns and went in great state, and the Admiral remarks to the King and Queen, that their Highnesses would have been highly pleased to observe their manners. Guacanagari came to receive him on landing, and

<sup>153</sup> These were the names of districts in the island of Española, and not separate isles.

ed him by the arm to the house where he was entertained the day before; here was a daïs and seats, upon which he made him sit down; he then took his own crown from his head and placed it upon that of the Admiral, who in return took from his neck a splendid collar made of very beautiful beads, and put it upon that of the king, also divesting himself of a cloak of fine scarlet cloth, which he had put on that day, he clothed the king with it. He then sent for a pair of coloured buskins which he put upon his feet, and a large silver ring upon his finger, having heard that the Indians had seen a sailor with a trinket of that metal, and had tried hard to obtain it. The king was greatly pleased with these gifts, and two of the other chiefs came to the Admiral and gave him each a great plate of soft gold. While they were here, an Indian arrived saying he had two days since left the caravel Pinta in a harbour at the East. The Admiral returned to his vessel, and Vincent Yañez, the captain, told him that he had seen rhubarb, and that it was to be found at the island Amiga, at the entrance of the harbour which was named Mar de Santo Tome, six leagues from thence, and that he had recognized both the root and the branches. The description given of the rhubarb is that it sends forth flowers, and berries which appear like green mulberries half dried, the stalk near the root is of a fine yellow colour, and the root itself like a large pear.

Monday, Dec. 31st. This day was occupied in taking on board water and wood for their return to Spain. The Admiral's object in hastening thither was to carry the in-

telligence as speedily as possible to the King and Queen, that ships might be dispatched to complete the discoveries, since that now appeared a matter of wonderful importance and vast labour. He was, however, unwilling to depart before he had seen all the land towards the east, and also examined the coast to learn the route thither from Castile, for he wished to fetch cattle and other things; but being with a single vessel, he thought it not prudent to expose himself to the dangers attendant upon such an enterprise. He complains that all these troubles were occasioned by the *Pinta*'s having forsaken him.

Tuesday, Jan. 1st, 1493. At midnight the boat was sent to the island *Amiga* for rhubarb, and returned at Vespers with a large basket of it, not having procured more for want of a spade to dig with: what was obtained he preserved to show the King and Queen. The king of that country had, he says, sent off many canoes to collect gold. The canoe which had been dispatched in quest of the *Pinta*, returned without seeing her. The sailor who went in the canoe stated, that at twenty leagues distance they met a king, who wore upon his head two great plates of gold, and as soon as the Indians whom he accompanied in the canoe spoke to him, he took them off. He also saw other Indians with large quantities of gold. The Admiral believed that *Guacanagari* had prohibited all the others from selling gold to the Spaniards, that it might all pass through his hands. The Admiral already knew the places, as above stated, where it was so plenty as not to be valued. The spicery as the Admiral says, is also abundant, and more valuable than pepper or grains-of-paradise. He left or-

lers with those that remained, to collect as much of it as possible.

Wednesday, Jan. 2d. He went on shore in the morning, to take leave of King Guacanagari and set out in the name of the Lord. He gave him one of his own shirts, and conversing with him about the Caribs, who made war upon the people of the island, he determined to give him an experiment of the force of fire-arms; for this purpose a *lombarda* was ordered to be loaded, and fired against the side of the ship which was ashore; the shot passed through her and struck the sea at a distance. He also gave him a mock battle between parties of the crew, armed, informing the Cacique that he need not fear the Caribs, even if they should attack him. All this was done, as he informs us, to strike a terror into the inhabitants, and make them friendly to the Spaniards left behind. He took the king and his attendants along with him to his house to dine. At parting he gave a strict charge to Diego de Arana, Pedro Gutierrez and Rodrigo Escovedo, whom he constituted his lieutenants over the force of the settlement, that everything should be well grounded and regulated for the service of God and their Highnesses. The Cacique displayed great affection towards the Admiral, and indulged a deep sorrow at separating from him, especially when he saw him about to embark. One of the Indians told the Admiral that he had ordered his statue to be made of gold as large as life, and that it was to be finished in ten days. He went on board with the intention of setting sail, but the wind did not permit it.

He left in this island of Española, which the Indians

called Bohio, a fort and thirty-nine <sup>154</sup> men, whom he states to have been great friends of King Guacanagari. Over these he placed Diego de Arana, a native of Cordova, Pedro Gutierrez, Groom of the King's Wardrobe, and Rodrigo de Escovedo, a native of Seville, and nephew of Fray Rodrigo Perez, with all the powers the King and Queen had delegated to him. He left them all the goods which had been sent for trafficking, being a great amount, and everything belonging to the ship which had been wrecked; the goods, he directed, should be traded away for gold. To these were added biscuit-bread for a year, wine, and much artillery, and the long-boat of the ship, in order that they might (being mariners for the most part), at convenient opportunities, undertake the discovery of the gold mine (so that the Admiral would find a quantity of gold ready for his return), and a place proper for building a city, as this port did not suit him, and especially because the gold came from the east, and the further east they were, the nearer to Spain; he also left them seed for sowing, his officers, the secretary and *alguacil*, a ship-carpenter and calker, a good gunner and engineer, a cooper, a surgeon and a tailor, all seamen.

Thursday, Jan. 3d. He did not set sail today, because the Indians belonging to the ships remained on shore. At night three of them arrived, and reported that the remainder with their wives were coming. The sea was somewhat rough, not suffering the boat to lie at the shore. The Admiral determined to sail, by the grace of God, the next

<sup>154</sup> The total number, with officers, was forty-five, according to some accounts.

morning. He says that if he had had the caravel Pinta with him, he should have been certain of obtaining a ton of gold, for in that case he should have ventured to coast along these islands, which being alone, he dared not do lest an accident should befall him and hinder his returning to Castile and informing the King and Queen of the discoveries he had made. Even had he been certain that the Pinta would arrive safe thither, with Martin Alonso Pinzon, he should have indulged his wish of surveying further these parts, but he had not that certainty, and feared too that Pinzon might go and give a false relation to the King and Queen, in order to escape the punishment which he merited for his misconduct in abandoning the Admiral without leave, and thereby lessening the benefits which might then have been obtained or ascertained. The Admiral says he trusted that our Lord would grant him a favourable passage, and a remedy for all evils.

Friday, Jan. 4th. At sunrise they weighed anchor and stood out of the harbour with a light wind; they steered to the N.W. passing the shoal by a channel much narrower than that by which they had entered. These are very good entrances to sail in to *Villa de Navidad*,<sup>155</sup> and contain in their shallowest parts from three to nine fathoms depth of water; they extend from N.W. to S.E. Here are shoals which reach from Cabo Santo to Cabo de Sierpe above six leagues, and extend three leagues into the sea. A league from Cabo Santo there are no more than eight fathoms water, and within this cape towards the east, are many

<sup>155</sup> The name given by Columbus to the fort and settlement here, he having arrived on Christmas Day.



shoals with navigable channels. All this coast runs N.W. and S.E., and has a beach throughout its whole extent; the land is very level for a space of four leagues from the shore, when it becomes diversified with lofty mountains, the whole very populous and abounding with large towns and good people, for so they showed themselves to the Christians. They continued along the coast to the east in the direction of a very tall mountain, finely shaped like a tent, and which appeared to be an island, but was found to be connected with a low tract of the country. This the Admiral named Monte Cristi, it is situated exactly east of Cabo Santo at the distance of eighteen leagues;<sup>156</sup> they were unable to reach it this day within six leagues, the wind being light. They found four low sandy islets,<sup>157</sup> with a reef extending to the N.W. and S.E. Within is a large gulf which reaches from the mountain above-mentioned, three leagues to the S.W.<sup>158</sup> It is throughout very shallow, and abounding with banks, and along the coast are many streams not navigable, although the sailor whom the Admiral sent in the canoe after the Pinta, related that he saw a river<sup>159</sup> which ships might enter. They anchored here in nineteen fathoms water, at the distance of six leagues from Monte Cristi, where they remained all night, having kept off from land to avoid the numerous shoals hereabouts. The Admiral here gives directions for sailing to Villa de Navidad, that on picking up Monte Cristi one should

<sup>156</sup> The true distance is ten leagues.

<sup>157</sup> Les Sept Frères.

<sup>158</sup> Navarrete's correction of the copyist's "twenty leagues to the S.E." The gulf mentioned is the Bay of Manzanillo.

<sup>159</sup> Rio Tapion.

stand off two leagues, etc., but as the coast is now known, it was not thought advisable to copy them. He concludes that Cipango must be in this island, and that it contains great store of gold, spices, mastick and rhubarb.

Saturday, Jan. 5th. Just before sunrise, they set sail with a land-breeze, which afterwards shifted to the east. They espied near Monte Cristi within an islet,<sup>180</sup> a good harbour where they might anchor that night. Standing to the E.S.E., and afterwards to the S.S.E., they sailed six leagues towards that place and found seventeen fathoms' water with a good bottom; they continued on three leagues farther with the same depth. Afterwards the depth diminished to twelve fathoms towards the brow of the mountain, off against which they found nine fathoms, the bottom being all a fine sand. Keeping on in this direction, they arrived between the mountain and the islet, where they found a fine harbour of smooth water, having three fathoms and a half depth. Here they anchored, and the Admiral landed in a boat. They found on shore, a fire and other indications that fishermen had been there. Many stones of variegated colours were seen, in fact a quarry of these beautiful works of nature; they were similar to those found in San Salvador, and were fit from their beauty to be used in the construction of churches, or royal edifices. Plants of the mastick were also met with. This eminence called Monte Cristi, says the Admiral, appears at a distance like an island; it is lofty, finely shaped, and accessible in every part. The country around is flat, consisting of very beautiful fields; the isolated mountain thus ap-

<sup>180</sup> Cabra.

pears from a distance to have no connection with the rest of the land. From this mountain they discovered a cape toward the east, twenty-four miles distant, which was named *Cabo del Becerro*.<sup>161</sup> Within this distance lie several reefs, which extend a couple of leagues toward the sea; they appear to contain some channels which may be entered, but this should be done by day, with the boat sent ahead to sound. The shore within, for four leagues east of the mountain, is a fine beach, and the country back, level and beautiful; the rest of the distance, the land is very lofty, with tall mountains of a delightful appearance and under cultivation. In the interior is a chain of mountains, the finest they had seen, running N.E. and S.E.(?), and which closely resembles the Sierra of Cordova. At a greater distance towards the south and S.E., are other very high mountains, with verdant and beautiful valleys of great extent, abounding in streams of water. The whole scene has such a variety of attractions that the thousandth part could not be described. Towards the east about a hundred miles distant, appears an eminence which is like Monte Cristi in size and beauty; from thence to the N.E. the land is lower, extending for about a hundred miles.

Sunday, Jan. 6th. The harbour was found to offer a good shelter against all winds except the N. and N.W., which, however, the Admiral says, are not common here, and even from these, a safety may be obtained behind the islet. The depth there is from three to four fathoms. At sunrise they set sail and proceeded along the coast, which runs to the East. Many reefs of sand and rocks are

<sup>161</sup> Punta Rucia.

scattered along its extent, of which it is necessary to take heed; within them are very good harbours, with entrances by channels between the shoals. In the afternoon, the wind blowing strong from the E., a sailor was sent to the mast-head to look out for the shallows, when he discovered the caravel *Pinta* bearing down upon them before the wind; no good anchorage being found in the neighbourhood because of the shoals, the Admiral hove about and stood back for Monte Cristi from which they had gone ten leagues; the *Pinta* kept him company, and Martin Alonso Pinzon came on board the *Niña* to make his excuses, saying he had parted against his will; he offered several reasons for his conduct, which the Admiral says were all totally false, as he was actuated solely by his haughtiness and avidity in abandoning him. He confesses himself unable to learn the cause of the pride and insolence which this man had manifested towards him throughout the voyage; but the Admiral concealed his resentment, that he might not aid the machinations of Satan in impeding the voyage, as he had hitherto done. The immediate occasion of his deserting him, was the information he got from an Indian whom the Admiral had placed on board his vessel, that in an island called Baneque he would find abundance of gold, and knowing his vessel to be light and a swift sailer he did not hesitate to abandon him as before related: while the Admiral wished to stay and coast along the islands of Juana and Española, since they all lay on one easterly course. It was ascertained that Martin Alonso, on arriving at Baneque, had not found any gold, and had thence returned to the coast of Española, because of the

information of other Indians, who told him that this island of Española, which they called Bohio, held a great quantity and many gold-mines. Therefore he coasted along the island for a distance of fifteen leagues approaching near Villa de la Navidad, in which progress he spent above twenty days; this account confirmed the accuracy of the reports given by the Indians, of his being seen in the neighbourhood, upon the strength of which King Guacanagari sent the canoe after him, with a sailor sent by the Admiral, and the ship must have left before their arrival. The Admiral states that in this time the Pinta had obtained much gold by trading, buying for a thong of leather, pieces as big as the two fingers, and at times as big as the hand. Of the metal thus acquired, Martin Alonso kept half himself, and divided the rest among his crew. The Admiral makes this remark, 'Thus I perceive, Sovereign Princes, that it was a providence of our Lord in suffering the ship to be cast away here, it being the best place in the whole island for a settlement, and nearest to the gold mines.' He adds that he had learnt of another island behind that of Juana toward the South, in which there was a still greater quantity of gold, and where it was found in grains of the size of a bean: in Española they are met with in the mines as large as kernels of wheat.<sup>162</sup> This first mentioned isle was called by the Indians *Yamaye*.<sup>163</sup> The Admiral says he was informed by many persons of an island towards the East inhabited solely by women. From the island of Española or from that of Yamaye to the

<sup>162</sup> Las Casas states that he had seen lumps of gold found in this last island, which would weigh eight pounds.

<sup>163</sup> Jamaica.

main land, the distance was described as ten days voyage in a canoe, which might be sixty or seventy leagues. It was said that the people of the continent wore clothing.

Monday, Jan. 7th. The Admiral's caravel having a leak, he this day ordered her to be caulked, and sent the sailors ashore for wood. They found many mastick and aloe trees.

Tuesday, Jan. 8th. The wind blowing hard from the E. and S.E., he did not sail today, but continued providing wood, water, and other necessities for the voyage. It was the Admiral's wish to coast along the whole island of Española, which he might have done upon his course homeward, but as he considered that the captains of the two caravels were brothers, namely Martin Alonso Pinzon, and Vincent Yañez, and that they had a party attached to them, the whole of whom had displayed great haughtiness and avarice, considering everything as already their own property, and continuing to disobey his commands and even to wrong him both in words and in deeds, without provocation, regardless of the honours he had conferred upon them, all which misdemeanours as well as the treachery of Martin Alonso, in deserting him out of sheer wantonness from the 21st of November to the 6th of January, he had winked at, without complaining, in order not to throw impediments in the way of the voyage—he thought it best to return home as quickly as possible. He adds, that he possessed many faithful men among his crews, but resolved to put up with the behaviour of the refractory ones, and not at such an unfavourable season undertake their punishment. The Admiral went in the

boat to a river which was situated a league to the S.S.W. from Monte Cristi, and where the sailors got the water for the vessels. This river <sup>164</sup> was found wide and of a great depth at the mouth. The sand at the bottom, he says, was full of fine gold dust, in a wonderful quantity though very fine, and he imagined that it was worn thus in its passage down the river. Many large grains were found of the size of lentils, and the finer sort was in great abundance. <sup>165</sup> The tide being up, he ascended the river a stone's throw, in order to reach the fresh water, here they filled the casks, and returning to the caravel, found bits of gold between the hoops of the casks and of the baler. The Admiral named this river *Rio del Oro* (River of Gold), it has a narrow and shoal entrance, but immediately within there is great depth. Its distance from Villa de la Navidad is seventeen leagues, <sup>166</sup> within this extent are many other streams and in particular three, which from their superior size, the Admiral thought must contain more gold than the one he visited. This last is nearly as large as the Guadalquivir at Cordova, and is not twenty leagues from the mines. <sup>167</sup> The Admiral concludes by saying that he thought it not necessary to take on board any of the golden sand, as their Highnesses had it within their reach at the port of Navidad, and especially because he wished to return with all speed, and communicate the news of his discoveries, and get rid of the disagreeable society of a crew he had always considered refractory.

<sup>164</sup> St. Jago or Yaque.

<sup>165</sup> Most, if not all, of this substance was not gold.

<sup>166</sup> The true distance is only eight leagues.

<sup>167</sup> There were mines within four leagues, according to Las Casas.

Wednesday, Jan. 9th. At midnight he set sail with a Southeasterly wind, and steered to the E.N.E., in the afternoon, three hours before nightfall, he arrived and anchored under the shelter of a cape sixty miles<sup>168</sup> East of Monte Cristi, this he named *Punta Roja*.<sup>169</sup> Here were extensive reefs, on which account he did not leave the place through the night: he thought the reefs might prove useful in the future, for they were probably penetrated by channels and would thus provide a very deep, good anchorage sheltered from all the winds. The land from Monte Cristi to the place where they anchored, was high but level, with beautiful fields, which rose to a chain of fine mountains running from E. to W., covered with cultivation and presenting a most enchanting view; streams of water were also in abundance. All along the coast there are great multitudes of turtle, of which the sailors took some at Monte Cristi, as they came on shore to lay their eggs. They were as big as a buckler of the largest size. The Admiral relates, that when on his visit to the Rio del Oro yesterday, he saw three mermaids standing high out of the water, they had faces something similar to those of human beings, but were not so handsome as it was customary to represent them: he adds that he has formerly seen them in Guinea, upon the Pepper coast.<sup>170</sup> This night, he says, he intends to set sail in the name of our Lord, without suffering himself to be detained here longer by any thing; hav-

<sup>168</sup> Forty-two miles according to other accounts.

<sup>169</sup> Punta Isabelica.

<sup>170</sup> The manati of the West Indies and the dugong of Africa combine an obviously mammalian head and body with a fishlike tail and often stand in the water in a human posture.



ing accomplished the main object of his enterprise; and as he is anxious to free himself from the troubles which Martin Alonso causes him, and inform the King and Queen of his voyage and performances, 'after which,' says he, 'I shall no more suffer the practices of worthless and malignant persons who behave with such disobedience and want of respect to one who has shown them so distinguished favours.'

Thursday, Jan. 10th. They set sail from their anchorage, and at sunset came to a river,<sup>171</sup> which the Admiral named *Rio de Gracia*, its distance was three leagues to the S.E. They anchored at its mouth, finding a convenient spot on the Eastern side. There is a bar at the entrance, having but two fathoms water, and the channel very narrow. Within is a harbour well inclosed, but subject to mist, from which the caravel *Pinta* had suffered severely, she having been, while absent from the Admiral, sixteen days here, trading for gold, the thing Martin Alonso was in quest of. It was ascertained that this man having learnt from the Indians that the Admiral was upon the coast, and he could not miss him, he resolved to return to his company, having endeavoured to procure all his crew to swear that they had been there but six days; but his villainy, says the Admiral, was so apparent, that it could not be concealed. He had made regulations that the half of all the gold discovered, or obtained by barter, should be his property; and at leaving this place took six of the Indians, four men and two girls, on board his vessel by force; these the Admiral ordered to be clothed, and sent to their homes, 'which,' he

<sup>171</sup> Rio Chuzona Chico.

says, 'is for the service of your Highnesses, for they are all your Highnesses' subjects, especially those of this island, where the people should receive all favour and respect from us, as the place contains so many fine countries with gold and spicery, and the settlement which has been made.'

Friday, Jan. 11th. At midnight they sailed from Rio de Gracia with a land-breeze, proceeding four leagues to the E. toward a cape which the Admiral named *Belprado*. S.E. from this, at a distance, according to his account, of eight leagues, is a mountain which he called *Monte de Plata*.<sup>172</sup> E. by S., eighteen leagues distant, is a cape which he named *Cabo del Angel*. Between this and Monte de Plata is a gulf,<sup>173</sup> bordered by a most charming country, consisting of lofty and beautiful fields extending far into the land. At a distance back is a chain of mountains running from E. to W., very tall and presenting a beautiful view. At the foot of the mountain above-mentioned is an excellent harbour<sup>174</sup> having fourteen fathoms depth at the mouth. The mountain is lofty and handsome, covered with settlements, and in the Admiral's opinion contains fine streams of water and much gold. Four leagues E. by S. of Cabo del Angel is a point which he called *Punta del Hierro*.<sup>175</sup> Four leagues farther on is another, named by him, *Punta Seca*.<sup>176</sup> Another called *Cabo Redondo*,<sup>177</sup> six leagues beyond that. East from this last, is another, which he named *Cabo Frances*, beyond which is a bay<sup>178</sup> but which did not appear a

<sup>172</sup> *I.e.*, Silver Mountain. It is very lofty, and always covered with a white cloud, which gives it a silvery appearance.

<sup>173</sup> Port of St. Jago.

<sup>174</sup> Puerto de Plata.

<sup>175</sup> Punta Macuris.

<sup>176</sup> Punta Sesua.

<sup>177</sup> Cabo de la Roca.

<sup>178</sup> Bahia Escocesa.

good anchoring place. A league from the bay is a cape called *Cabo del Buen tiempo*, and another league S. by E. from this, a cape which he named *Tajado*. To the South another was seen, apparently fifteen leagues distant. They made a great progress this day, as both the wind and the currents were favourable. Not daring to anchor for fear of the shoals, they beat up and down all night.

Saturday, Jan. 12th. At day-break they stood to the East with a fresh breeze, and sailed by sunrise twenty miles, the following two hours twenty-four miles, when they discovered land to the South,<sup>179</sup> forty-eight miles distant. The Admiral says that for the ship's safety they had gone in the night, twenty-eight miles to the N.N.E. Standing for the land they discovered a cape which was named *Cabo de Padre y Hijo* (Cape of the Father and Son), as it has toward the East two detached rocks of unequal size.<sup>180</sup> Two leagues to the East, an opening was descried between two large mountains, which he saw to be a fine large harbour with a good entrance. Being so early, they did not enter, not wishing to lose time, as the wind then blew from the N.N.W., although for the most part they had found it to blow from the E. Continuing their course E. they came to a cape which the Admiral called *Cabo del Enamorado* <sup>181</sup> (the lover's cape); it was of craggy rock and very high, at a distance of thirty-two miles E. of the harbour abovementioned, named by him *Puerto Sacro*.<sup>182</sup> From this place they discovered another

<sup>179</sup> The peninsula of Samaná.

<sup>180</sup> Yazual Island.

<sup>181</sup> Cabo Cabron.

<sup>182</sup> Puerto Yaqueron.

promontory,<sup>183</sup> loftier and handsomer than the last, of a round shape, and all of rock, like Cape St. Vincent in Portugal; it was twelve miles E. of Cabo Enamorado. Arrived off this last, they discovered between these two headlands a very large bay<sup>184</sup> of three leagues in breadth, with a little isle in the middle. They found the water deep in the mouth near the shore, where they anchored in twelve fathoms, and sent the boat for water, and to converse with the inhabitants, but they all fled. The Admiral stopped here wishing to ascertain if this land was part of Española, suspecting that the gulf was really a channel separating it from the rest.<sup>185</sup> He was astonished at the great size of the island of Española.

Sunday, Jan. 13th. They did not sail, as no land breeze blew. The Admiral wished to go in search of a better harbour, as this was somewhat unsheltered, and he was desirous of witnessing the conjunction of the sun, moon, and Mercury in opposition to Jupiter, which was due on the 17th of the month and occasions high winds. The boat was sent on shore to procure *ajes* for provision; they landed upon a beach in the neighbourhood, and found several Indians with bows and arrows: they entered into conversation with them, purchased two bows and a lot of arrows, and persuaded one of their number to accompany them on board the caravel, to visit the Admiral. This man was of a more displeasing appearance than any that had yet been seen; his face was smutted all over with charcoal, though in all parts they are accustomed to paint

<sup>183</sup> Cabo Samaná.

<sup>184</sup> Bay of Samaná.

<sup>185</sup> This was not the case.

themselves with a variety of colours. His hair was long, gathered and tied behind, and enclosed in a coif of parrots' feathers. He was totally naked. The Admiral took him for one of the Caribs who were man-eaters, and believed that the gulf seen yesterday was a separation between Española and another island. He asked him for the Caribs, and he answered by signs that their land was to the East in the neighbourhood; the Admiral says he saw it the day previous, before entering the bay. The Indian informed him that much gold existed there, and in masses as big as the poop of the caravel, pointing at it. He called the gold *tuob*, not understanding it by *caona*, as it was called in the other part of the island, nor by *nozay*, which was the name of it in San Salvador, and the other islands. Copper, or base gold, was called in Española *tuob*. The Indian also spake of the island of *Matinino*, which according to his account was peopled by women, without a single man, and contained much *tuob*; he described it as situated East of *Carib*. Another island containing gold he called *Goanin*.<sup>186</sup> The Admiral says he had been informed of these islands some time before, and by several persons. In all the islands they had visited, he declares that the inhabitants entertained great fear of *Carib*, which in some parts they called *Caniba*, but in Española *Carib*. He thinks them to be a warlike nation, as they make incursions upon the other islands and devour the prisoners whom they take. He understood some of the words which this Indian used, and

<sup>186</sup> *Goanin*, according to Las Casas, was the name given by the Indians to a sort of inferior gold, which emitted an odor, and was highly prized by them. The Caribs inhabited the southern West Indies, but Columbus uses the word for Porto Rico, part of which was inhabited by them.

by their help obtained the above intelligence; the Indians on board understood more, although there was a difference in their dialects, occasioned by their countries being so remote from one another. The Indian above mentioned, after having been feasted, was sent away with a present of pieces of red and green cloth and glass beads, of which these people are very fond, the Admiral requesting him to bring back gold, if he possessed any, which was suspected from some small things he carried with him. When the boat arrived at the land, they discovered among the woods, fifty-five Indians, armed with bows; they were all naked, with coarse hair, as long as the women wear it in Castile; the back part of their heads was adorned with crests of the feathers of parrots and other birds. The Indian in the boat, landing, joined the others, and prevailed with them to lay down their arms, which consisted of bows and arrows with heavy wooden staves like . . .<sup>187</sup> which they carry for swords. They then came to the boat, and the crew landed and went to purchasing their bows and arrows and other arms, having been so ordered by the Admiral. The Indians having sold two bows, refused to part with any more, but prepared to attack the Spaniards, and running back for the bows and arrows they had left in a place apart, returned bringing cords, for the purpose, as it seemed, of binding their prisoners. The Spaniards finding themselves about to be attacked, prepared for it, having many times before been instructed by the Admiral

<sup>187</sup> Word omitted. Las Casas describes these wooden swords as resembling the iron shovels used in Spain for frying eggs or fish; they were made of the hardest palm-wood, flat and blunt-edged and two fingers thick. Some were as long as a man.

to be upon their guard, and as the Indians were running to the assault, fell upon them, wounding one in the breast with their cross-bows, and one upon the posteriors with a sword. The Indians finding they were likely to have the worst of the affray, although their enemies were but seven, and they above fifty, took to flight every one, leaving their bows and arrows scattered here and there. The Spaniards would have killed many, but the pilot who commanded them, would not permit it. They then returned on board the caravel, and informed the Admiral of the adventure, who states that he regretted it on some accounts, but was otherwise glad, because these Indians, whom he was now confident were Caribs, and a savage, man-eating race, would entertain a dread of the Spaniards, and if the thirty-nine men whom he had left at the fortress and town of Navidad, should make a voyage hither in their boat, the natives would be cautious of offending them. Even if these were not Caribs,<sup>188</sup> they must belong to some neighbouring people of the same customs and equally fearless, whereas the inhabitants of the other islands were cowardly and unreasonably devoid of arms. All these are the Admiral's opinions; he also says he wished to capture some of these natives. Many smokes were seen up in the country, as had been observed all over the island of Española.

Monday, Jan. 14th. The Admiral wishing to make prisoners of some of the Indians whom he thought to be Caribs, intended to dispatch the boat to land in the night, to visit their houses for this purpose, but the wind blowing

<sup>188</sup> Las Casas says they were Cigayos, a race inhabiting this N.E. portion of Española.

strong from the E. and N.E., occasioned a rough sea which prevented it. When the day came, a great many of the natives were seen on shore, and the Admiral sent the boat well armed to land. The Indians all came crowding around her stern, and among them the one who had visited the caravel and received the presents the day before. With these also came a king of the country, who had dispatched this Indian with some beads to give the boat's crew in token of security and peace. The king with three of his men, entered the boat and went on board the caravel. The Admiral treated them with biscuit and treacle, and gave the king a red cap, some beads, and red cloth; to the others he presented pieces of cloth, and dismissed them all highly pleased to land, the king informing him that he would bring him the next day a golden mask, and that there was much of the metal at this place, as well as in Carib and Matinino.

The Admiral here states that the caravels were very leaky about the keels, and complains much of the calkers at Palos, who did their work very badly, and when this had been discovered by him, and he endeavoured to make them mend it, had absconded. But he says that in spite of the bad state of his vessels he confides in our Lord, that as he has brought him to these parts, so he will in his great mercy return him; for his Heavenly Majesty knew what struggles it had cost him to set on foot this enterprise, and that he alone had favoured him before the King and Queen, all others in the most unreasonable manner opposing him. He adds, 'these last have been the cause that the royal crown of your Highnesses does not possess



at this day an hundred millions of revenue more than when I entered your service, from which time it will be seven years the twentieth day of this month of January; but the greater will be the increase to arrive hereafter. But Almighty God will remedy all.' These are his words.

Tuesday, Jan. 15th. The Admiral wished to sail, as his stay could no longer be of any profit, on account of the miscarriage of his plans through the rupture with the Indians. He says he has learnt to-day that most of the gold is in the neighbourhood of Villa de la Navidad, and that in the island of Carib, there is much copper, as also in Matinino. To explore the first, he thinks will be difficult, on account of the ferocity of the inhabitants, and the last is stated to be peopled solely by women. The island of Carib was seen from this place, and he determined, as they both lay in his route, to visit them and capture some of the natives. He sent the boat to land, where they found that the king had not arrived, his town being at a distance; he, however, sent his golden crown, as he had promised the day before, and many of his men came bringing cotton, bread and *ajes*, all armed with bows and arrows. The traffic between them being finished, there came four young Indians on board the caravel, where they gave so good an account to the Admiral, of the island to the east, which lay in his course homeward, that he determined to take them with him to Castile. Here he relates that they had no iron nor any other metal that he had seen, although he acknowledges it impossible to learn much of the country in a few days, especially with the language difficulty, for he could only guess at the meaning of the natives,

while the time was too short for them to grasp what he desired to learn. The bows here, he describes as equal in size to those of France and England, and the arrows just like the javelins used by the inhabitants of the other isles, which are made of stalks of the cane while in seed; they are very straight, about a yard and a half in length, or two, with a sharp piece of wood a span and a half long at the end; at the point of this some affix a fish tooth, but the most of them, a thorn. These arrows are shot in an unusual manner which prevents their doing much harm. A great deal of cotton was found at this place, very fine and long. Mastick trees were in abundance, the bows of the Indians appeared to be made of yew, and there was both gold and copper there. The land was found to produce much *aji*,<sup>189</sup> which is the pepper of the inhabitants, and more valuable than the common sort; they deem it very wholesome and eat nothing without it. Fifty caravels might be loaded every year with this commodity in Española. The Admiral states that he found in this bay a great deal of that sort of weed which they met at sea upon their passage; on which account he imagined there were islands extending to the east as far as the place where they first perceived it, as he held it for certain that this weed grew in shoal water near the land. He adds that if the above be correct, these Indies must stretch very near the Canary Isles, in his opinion less than four hundred leagues distant.

Wednesday, Jan. 16th. Three hours before day they set sail from this gulf, which the Admiral named *Golfo de las Flechas* (the Gulf of Arrows).<sup>190</sup> They had at first

<sup>189</sup> Red dwarf-pepper.

<sup>190</sup> Bahía de Samaná.

a land breeze, which afterwards shifted to the west, when they steered east by north, for the island of Carib,<sup>191</sup> which contained the people of whom all the other Indians stood in terror, as they were accustomed to scour all those seas with innumerable fleets of canoes, and devour their prisoners. Some of the four Indians whom they had taken at the Port of Arrows on the previous day, directed them upon the route. After sailing, as they judged sixty-four miles, the Indians signified to them that the island was to the S.E., when they altered their course and proceeded in that direction, and having sailed a couple of leagues, the wind freshened and blew very favourably for their return to Spain. The Admiral had noticed that the crews began to despond at leaving their direct course homeward, on account of the leaky state of the vessels, there being no remedy for it but the help of God, and the Admiral found himself constrained to give up the course which he believed would lead him to the island, and steer directly for Spain. He accordingly shaped his route N.E. by E., and sailed by sunset forty-eight miles or twelve leagues. The Indians informed him that in this direction he would meet with the island of Matinino, which was inhabited only by women; the Admiral was very desirous to visit the place and carry five or six of the inhabitants to his Sovereigns, but doubted whether the Indians knew the course thither. Besides, he was unwilling to be detained any longer with his leaky vessels. He says, however, that the fact respecting this island is certain, and that the in-

<sup>191</sup> Porto Rico is meant, though the Caribs had only settled in the eastern part of the island.

abitants are visited at particular times of the year, by men from the isle of Carib, which is about ten or a dozen leagues distant, and the male children which are born, they send to that place, but keep the females themselves.<sup>192</sup> The Admiral believed these two islands to be at the S.E., and not more than fifteen or twenty leagues from the place whence they had sailed, but he thought the Indians were unable to point out the way. Losing sight of a cape in Española, which he named *San Theramo*,<sup>193</sup> and which bore west, sixteen leagues distant, they sailed twelve leagues E. by N. The weather was very fine.

Thursday, Jan. 17th. At sunset yesterday, the wind abated a little, and they sailed for fourteen glasses, each of half an hour or a trifle less, till the first watch, going four miles an hour, which made twenty-eight miles. The wind then freshened and they sailed under it the whole watch, which was ten glasses, and afterwards six more till sunrise, at eight miles an hour, making in all eighty-four miles or twenty-one leagues, N.E. by E. By sunset they sailed forty-four miles or eleven leagues farther, in an easterly direction. Here a gannet came on board the caravel, and afterwards another. They saw much sea-weed.<sup>194</sup>

Friday, Jan. 18th. Kept on their course at night E. by S., and sailed forty miles or ten leagues. Afterwards steered

<sup>192</sup> This story about Martinique is frequently repeated; it may be connected with the myth that one of the founders of the human race had abandoned his women on that island, but Columbus believed he had found that Guadeloupe had a population of women only, in 1496.

<sup>193</sup> Cape Samaná.

<sup>194</sup> There is a shoal in this neighborhood, which they passed four leagues to the south.

S.E. by E. till sunrise thirty miles, which are seven leagues and a half. After sunrise sailed all day with light winds, from E.N.E. and N.E. to more or less due E., steering N., N.E. or N.N.E., going in the whole sixty miles or fifteen leagues. But little sea-weed was seen, and the Admiral says that yesterday and to-day the ocean was covered with tunnies, which as he thinks were accustomed to direct their course from these parts, to the Duke's fisheries at Conil and Cadiz. A bird called a frigate-pelican, which flew about the caravel, and then went off to the S.S.E., caused the Admiral to think there were islands in that quarter;<sup>195</sup> E.S.E. of the island of Española, there lay, as he believed, the islands of Carib and Matinino and many others.

Saturday, Jan. 19th. In the night they sailed fifty-six miles N. by E., and sixty-four N.E. by N. After sunrise the wind blew fresh from E.S.E., and they stood N.E. and afterward N., going eighty-four miles, or twenty-one leagues. The sea was covered with tunnies of a small size, and they saw gannets, tropic birds, and frigate-pelicans.

Sunday, Jan. 20th. The wind died away at night, and afterwards blew in squalls; they sailed twenty miles to the N.E. After sunrise eleven miles to the S.E., and then thirty-six miles or nine leagues to the N.N.E. A vast number of small tunnies were seen; the air was fresh and soft as at Seville in April or May, and the sea — 'many thanks to God' says the Admiral — always smooth. Frigate-pelicans, sandpipers, and many other birds appeared.

Monday, Jan. 21st. Yesterday, after sunset they sailed N. by E., with the wind E. and N.E., going eight miles

<sup>195</sup> The Antilles or windward islands lay in this direction.

an hour till midnight, which make fifty-six miles. Afterwards they steered N.N.E., and sailed at the same rate throughout the night, making a hundred and four miles, or twenty-six leagues. After sunrise kept on the same course, with the wind at E., sometimes varying their course to the N.E., sailing in eleven hours, eighty-eight miles or twenty-one leagues, subtracting one which was lost in waiting to speak with the *Pinta*. The air was found cool, and this he expected to increase every day as they advanced toward the north, and had longer nights owing to the constriction of the sphere. A great many tropic birds, sandpipers and other fowl were seen, but not so great a multitude of fish as before, which was thought to be owing to the greater coolness of the water. Weeds also in abundance.

Tuesday, Jan. 22d. After sunset last evening they stood to the N.N.E., with the wind from E. to S.E., and sailed eight miles an hour for five glasses, adding three which were sailed before the watch, in all eight, which make seventy-two miles or eighteen leagues. Afterwards sailed N.E. and N. six glasses, eighteen miles farther. Then four glasses of the second watch to the N.E., six miles an hour, which make three leagues. Then till sunrise E.N.E., eleven glasses, six miles an hour, making eight leagues and a quarter. Then E.N.E. till eleven o'clock in the forenoon, thirty-two miles, when it fell calm and they made no further progress. The Indians went into the sea to swim. Tropic birds and much weed were seen.

Wednesday, Jan. 23d. Last night there were many changes of the wind; making all the customary calculations and allowances, they supposed their course had been

eighty-four miles or twenty-one leagues N.E. by N. The Admiral hove to many times for the Pinta, she sailing badly upon the wind, having little aid from her mizzen, as the mast was unsound. The Admiral remarks that if the captain, Martin Alonso Pinzon, had taken as much care to provide himself with a new mast in the Indies, where there are so many fine trees, as he had exerted in running away from him in the hope of loading his vessel with gold, they would not have laboured under that inconvenience. They saw many tropic birds and much weed; the sky was totally overcast, but no rain: the sea all the time smooth as a river; 'many thanks be to God,' says the Admiral. After sunrise they bore away to the N.E., and sailed thirty miles, or seven leagues and a half; then E.N.E. thirty miles farther.

Thursday, Jan. 24th. All last night the wind kept shifting toward the N.E., and they sailed forty-four miles, or eleven leagues; after sunrise E.N.E. fourteen leagues.

Friday, Jan. 25th. At night, sailed E.N.E., three glasses, nine leagues and a half, then N.N.E. six miles farther. After sunrise, the wind dying away, they made no more than twenty-eight miles, or seven leagues toward the E.N.E., till night. The sailors took a tunny and a very large shark, which was a seasonable supply of food, for they now had nothing to eat but bread and wine and Indian *ajes*.

Saturday, Jan. 26th. At night continued their course East by South, fifty-six miles, or fourteen leagues. After sunrise stood E.S.E. and Southeasterly, and sailed by eleven o'clock forty miles. Then hove about and stood

pon the wind twenty-four miles or six leagues to the North, until nightfall.

Sunday, Jan. 27th. After sunset steered N.E. and N., sailing five miles an hour for thirteen hours, which make sixty-five miles, or sixteen leagues and a half. At sunrise sailed N.E., twenty-four miles, or six leagues, till noon, and from that time till sunset, three leagues to the E.N.E.

Monday, Jan. 28th. All night steered E.N.E., thirty-six miles or nine leagues, and from sunrise till night, twenty miles, or five leagues, farther in the same direction. The air was soft and mild. Saw tropic birds, sandpipers, and much weed.

Tuesday, Jan. 29th. Steered E.N.E. in the night, with a Southerly or S.W. wind, sailing thirty-nine miles or nine leagues and a half. By day eight leagues farther. The air mild, as in Castile in April, and the sea smooth. Many dories leaped on board.

Wednesday, Jan. 30th. At night sailed seven leagues E.N.E. In the day, thirteen leagues and a half, South by East. Saw tropic birds, and abundance of tunnies and weed.

Thursday, Jan. 31st. Sailed in the night thirty miles North by East, then N.E. thirty-five miles, in all sixteen leagues. From sunrise till night, steered E.N.E., thirteen leagues and a half. Tropic birds and sandpipers were seen.

Friday, Feb. 1st. In the night sailed E.N.E., sixteen leagues and a half; in the day, twenty-nine leagues and a quarter, in the same direction. The sea very smooth, thanks to God.

Saturday, Feb. 2d. During the night sailed E.N.E. forty miles or ten leagues. In the day, with the same wind astern,



sailed seven miles an hour, going in eleven hours, seventy-seven miles, which are nineteen leagues and a quarter. The sea very smooth, thanks to God, and the air soft. The sea was so covered with weeds that those unacquainted with them would have taken them for shoals. Sandpipers were seen.

Sunday, Feb. 3d. The wind astern at night, and the sea smooth, thanks to God, they sailed twenty-nine leagues. The polar star appeared as high as at Cape St. Vincent, but the motion of the vessel would not allow them to take its altitude with the astrolabe or quadrant. In the day continued their course E.N.E., sailing ten miles an hour, going in eleven hours twenty-seven leagues.

Monday, Feb. 4th. At night, steered East by North, going twelve to ten miles an hour; sailed a hundred and thirty miles, which are thirty-two leagues and a half. The sky was very cloudy, with rain, and the air began to grow cold, for which reason the Admiral says he knew he had not yet reached the Azores. After sunrise, altered their course to the East. All day sailed seventy-seven miles, which are nineteen leagues and a quarter.

Tuesday, Feb. 5th. All night sailed East, fifty-four miles, or thirteen leagues and a half; in the day ten miles an hour, for eleven hours, making a hundred and ten miles, or twenty-seven leagues and a half. Saw sandpipers and some small sticks, a sign that they were near land.

Wednesday, Feb. 6th. In the night steered East, eleven miles an hour, going a hundred and forty-three miles, or thirty-five leagues and a quarter, in thirteen hours. Saw many sandpipers and other birds. In the day sailed four-

een miles an hour, making, day and night, about seventy-four leagues. Vincent Yañez said that this morning the island of Flores bore North, and that of Madeira, East. Roldan stated that the island of Fayal or that of St. Gregory bore N.E., and Porto Santo, East. Many weeds were seen.

Thursday, Feb. 7th. All night sailed East, ten miles an hour, making in thirteen hours a hundred and thirty miles, or thirty-two leagues and a half. In the day, eight miles an hour, making in eleven hours eighty-eight miles or twenty-two leagues. This morning the Admiral was by his reckoning, seventy-five leagues south of the island of Flores. The reckoning of Pedro Alonso, the pilot, carried him as far North as a point between Terceira and Santa Maria, and to the East, twelve leagues to windward of the meridian of Madeira, on the N. The sailors saw a great deal of weed, different from that observed before, and of that sort which abounds in the Azores. Afterwards met with it of the former kind.

Friday, Feb. 8th. At night sailed three miles an hour, to the E. for some time, then S.E.; going twelve leagues during the night. From sunrise till noon, sailed twenty-seven miles, and from that time to sunset, as much farther; in all, thirteen leagues S.S.E.

Saturday, Feb. 9th. Part of the night sailed S.S.E. three leagues, then S. by E., afterwards N.E. five leagues till ten o'clock, thence till night, nine leagues to the East.

Sunday, Feb. 10th. After sunset sailed E. all night, going a hundred and thirty miles, or thirty-two leagues and a half; from sunrise till night sailed nine miles an hour,

making in eleven hours ninety-nine miles, or twenty-four leagues and three quarters. On board the Admiral's caravel, reckonings were kept by Vincent Yañez, the two pilots, Sancho Ruiz and Pedro Alonso Niño, and Roldan. All these, by their own accounts were far beyond the Azores to the E., and no one so far north as Santa Maria, which is the most southerly of the group, so that their reckonings brought them in the neighbourhood of Madeira or Porto Santo. The Admiral was much behind them in his reckoning, finding himself that night S. of the island of Flores, and in the latitude of Nafe in Africa, and . . . leagues to windward of Madeira, on the north. Thus their accounts made them nearer to Spain than his by an hundred and fifty leagues. He remarks that by the grace of God they shall find upon making land, who is the most correct. He further observes that upon their passage out they sailed two hundred and sixty-three leagues beyond the island of Ferro before they met with the weeds.

Monday, Feb. 11th. Kept on their course in the night, twelve miles an hour, and sailed thirty-nine leagues; in the day, sixteen and a half. Saw many birds, on which account they thought themselves near land.

Tuesday, Feb. 12th. Sailed E. six miles an hour through the night, going seventy-three miles, or eighteen leagues and a quarter. Here the wind began to blow furiously with a heavy sea, and if the caravel had not been a good vessel, and well prepared, they would have been in danger of perishing. During the day they sailed eleven or twelve leagues with much labour and hazard.

Wednesday, Feb. 13th. From sunset till day, they la-

boured exceedingly with a high wind and furious sea; it lightened three times in the N.N.E., which in the Admiral's opinion was a sign of a violent tempest from that, or the opposite quarter. They scudded under bare poles most of the night, and afterwards set a little sail and went fifty-two miles or thirteen leagues. In the day the wind remitted somewhat, and then sprung up with more violence; the sea was terrible, running cross and causing the vessel to labour excessively. They made a progress of fifty-five miles, or thirteen leagues and a half.

Thursday, Feb. 14th. In the night the wind increased, and the sea was most tremendous, the waves crossing and dashing against one another, so that the vessel was overwhelmed, and not able to get out from between them, while they pounded upon her. The mainsail was set reefed very low, purely in order to carry her somewhat clear of the waves; they stood under it for three hours, going twenty miles, when the wind and sea increasing, they began to drive before it, not having any other remedy. At the same time, the *Pinta*, in which was Martin Alonso, began to scud likewise, and they soon lost sight of her, although all through the night the two caravels made signals to one another by lights, until from the fury of the storm they were no longer perceptible and the *Pinta* drove far off the Admiral's track.<sup>196</sup> The Admiral drove all night to the N.E. by E., going fifty-four miles or thirteen leagues. At sunrise the wind still increased, and the cross sea grew more and more terrible; they set the mainsail again, close-

<sup>196</sup> The *Pinta* arrived safely at a Galician port, and Martin Alonso Pinzon died soon after.

reefed, to carry them out from between the cross waves, to save them from foundering. They kept to the E.N.E., and afterwards to the N.E. going in six hours thus, seven leagues and a half. The Admiral ordered that lots should be cast for one of them to go on a pilgrimage to St. Mary of Guadelupe and carry a wax taper of five pounds weight; he caused them all to take an oath that the one on whom the lot fell, should perform the pilgrimage. For this purpose as many peas were selected as there were persons on board, upon one of them a cross was cut with a knife, and the whole shaken together in a cap. The first who put his hand in, was the Admiral, and he drew the crossed pea. So the lot fell upon him, and he looked upon himself as bound to accomplish the pilgrimage. Another lot was taken for a pilgrimage to St. Mary of Loretto, in the March of Ancona, territory of the pope, to the house where Our Lady has performed and still performs so many miracles, this fell upon a sailor of Puerto de Santa Maria, called Pedro de Villa; the Admiral promised to furnish him with money for his expenses. A third lot was determined upon, for the selection of a person who should watch a whole night in St. Clara de Moguer, and have a mass said there; it fell again upon the Admiral. After this, he and all the crew made a vow to go in procession, clothed in penitential garments, to the first church dedicated to Our Lady which they should meet with on arriving at land, and there pay their devotions.

Besides these general vows, every individual made his private one, all expecting to be lost, so furious was the rage of the hurricane. Their danger was increased by the want

of ballast in the vessel, as their provisions were mostly consumed, and their wine and water gone, which deficiencies the Admiral had neglected to supply among the islands, because he wished to husband his time in making discoveries, and expected to take in ballast at the isle of the women, which he intended to visit. All the remedy they could devise in the present extremity was to fill with seawater such empty water — or wine — casks as they could get at, and in this manner they obtained some relief.

Here the Admiral states the circumstances which caused him to fear that our Lord would suffer them to perish, and others which gave him hope that he would bring them safe to land, and not allow the important information they were carrying to the King and Queen to be lost. He seems to have felt the most anxious desire to have his great discovery known, so that the world might be convinced the assertions made by him had been correct, and that he had accomplished what he professed himself able to do; the thought of this not being done, gave him the greatest inquietude, and he was perpetually in apprehensions as the smallest trifle <sup>197</sup> might defeat or hinder his whole undertaking. He ascribes this to his want of faith and confidence in the Divine Providence, but comforts himself in reflecting upon the many mercies God had shown him in having enabled him to conquer all his adversities and hindrances in Castile, and accomplish his great discovery. And as he had made the service of God the aim and business of his undertaking, and he had hitherto favoured him in granting all his desire, he indulges a hope that he will continue that

<sup>197</sup> Literally, "each mosquito."

favour, and secure him a safe arrival. Especially he reflected that he had delivered him when he had much greater reason for fear, upon the outward voyage, at which time the crew rose up against him, and with an unanimous and threatening voice, resolved to return back, but the eternal God gave him spirit and valour against them all. With these thoughts and the consideration of other wonderful favours he had experienced on the voyage, besides those known to their Highnesses, he says he ought not to have been in fear of the tempest; but he adds that his apprehensions and the anguish of his mind would not allow him to rest; besides, he continues, his anxiety was increased in reflecting upon the state of his two sons whom he had left at their studies in Cordova, these would be left orphans in a foreign land, without father or mother, and the King and Queen being ignorant of the services he had rendered them by the voyage, would not feel any inclination to provide for them. On this account, and that their Highnesses might be informed that our Lord had granted complete success to the enterprise in the discovery of the Indies, and might know that storms did not prevail in those quarters <sup>198</sup> (which was apparent from the plants and trees growing actually in the sea), he devised a method of acquainting them with the circumstances of the voyage in case he should perish in the storm; this he performed by writing upon parchment an account of it, as full as possible, and earnestly entreating the finder to carry it to the King

<sup>198</sup> It was a very fortunate circumstance for Columbus that he arrived in the West Indies so late in the year. The hurricane season was just past, and had he reached there a month sooner, it is probable one of those dreadful tempests would have destroyed his whole fleet.

and Queen of Spain. The parchment was rolled up in a waxed cloth, and well tied; a large wooden cask being then produced, he placed it within, and threw it into the sea, none of the crew knowing what it was, but all taking it for some act of devotion. Violent showers of rain followed, and the wind shifted to the West, when they scudded before it under the foresail five hours, with a tremendous sea, going two leagues and a half to the N.E. The mainsail was taken in, lest the sea should carry it away altogether.

Friday, Feb. 15th. After sunset last night, the sky began to grow clear in the West, and the wind inclined to that quarter. The bonnet<sup>199</sup> was set upon the mainsail. The sea was still very high, but abating. They steered E.N.E. four miles an hour, and during the night went thirteen leagues. At sunrise they discovered land ahead, which some thought to be Madeira, and others the rock of Cintra near Lisbon. The land being about five leagues distant, the wind suddenly came round to the E.N.E., directly ahead, and the sea rolled very high from the West. According to the Admiral's reckoning they were near the Azores, and he took this for one of those islands. The others were by their calculation near Spain.

Saturday, Feb. 16th. All night they beat against the wind for the land, which was found to be an island. They stood to the N.E. and N.N.E. till sunrise, when they hove about for the South, in quest of the island, which was hidden from them by clouds, and discovered another island astern, at the distance of eight leagues. From sunrise till

<sup>199</sup> See note on entry of October 24th.



night they continued beating for the island, against a violent wind and heavy sea. At the time of saying the *salve* which is in the beginning of the night, a light was seen by some of the crew to leeward, which appeared to be the island first seen yesterday. All night they kept plying to windward, as far as possible, to approach one of the islands by sunrise. The Admiral took a little rest, having since Wednesday, neither slept nor been able to do so; he found himself exceedingly weak in the legs from exposure to the cold and waves, and the little food which he had taken. They steered S.S.W. at sunrise, and at night espied an island, which, by reason of the clouds, they did not recognize.

Monday, Feb. 18th. After sunset last night they sailed round the island to find an anchorage and communicate with those on shore. An anchor was dropped which they quickly lost, and were obliged to put to sea again, beating to windward all night. At sunrise they stood toward the North part of the island, where they once more cast anchor, and sending the boat to land, ascertained that it was the island of Sta. Maria, one of the Azores. The inhabitants directed them to a harbour for the caravel, and declared that they had never witnessed a storm like that which had endured for fifteen days past, and wondered how the Spaniards had escaped. The islanders returned thanks to God, and rejoiced much to hear that the Admiral had discovered the Indies. He says that his reckoning had been very true, for which he gave many thanks to our Lord. And although it had apparently run a little beyond their true situation, yet he had held it for certain that they were

in the neighbourhood of the Azores, one of which isles he thought this to be, upon the discovery of it. He adds that he suffered his reckoning to run ahead of their true progress for the purpose of misleading the pilots and others who made calculations, to remain the one master of that route to the Indies, in which in fact he succeeded, for none of them knew his course precisely and so they could not be certain of the route to the Indies.

Tuesday, Feb. 19th. After sunset, three men came down to the shore and called out to them. The boat was sent, and they came on board bringing fowls and new bread with other things, it being shrove-tide; these were sent by the Captain of the island, who was named Juan de Castañeda, and stated that he was well acquainted with the Admiral, but could not visit him on account of the night. He promised to come on board in the morning with other refreshments, and bring with him the three Spaniards who had been sent on shore and whom, as he declared, he detained for the great pleasure of hearing them relate the particulars of the voyage. The Admiral ordered every respect to be shown towards the messengers of the Captain, and assigned them beds for sleeping on board, as it was late and the town distant. And remembering the vow they had made during the storm, to go in penitential garments to the first church dedicated to Our Lady, which they should meet on coming to land, he directed that one half the crew should go and fulfil their vow at a chapel like a hermitage, near the shore, and himself with the other half afterwards. Not seeing any thing to fear on the land, and confiding in the offers of the Captain, and the amity which subsisted

between Portugal and Castile, he requested the three islanders to go to the town and send him an ecclesiastic for the purpose of reciting a mass. The crew went in their shirts to their devotions in accomplishment of the vows, when the whole population attacked them with horse and foot, the Captain at their head, and took them all prisoners. Meantime the Admiral continued waiting without any suspicion, for the return of the boat, that he might go with the rest of the crew in their turn. About eleven o'clock in the forenoon, seeing nothing of his men, he began to suspect that the Portuguese had detained them, or that the boat was wrecked, the shore being high and rocky. The Admiral had not seen what was happening, as the hermitage was situated behind a point. He ordered the anchor to be weighed, and they made sail till they came off against the place, when they saw many persons on horseback, who alighted and entering the boat with their arms, came off towards the caravel for the purpose of capturing the Admiral. The Captain stood up in the boat and demanded a security of the Admiral, who replied that he would grant the request, but wished to know why none of the Spaniards were in the boat; he invited him on board the caravel, promising to satisfy all his demands; this he did in order to make a prisoner of him and recover his crew, believing that he would not be breaking faith if he promised security to this Portuguese, who had offered him peace and security and then broken his compact. But the Captain, conscious of his own evil intentions, did not dare come on board. The Admiral seeing that he could not entice him into his hands, demanded to be informed, why he detained his men, and

said he would offend the King of Portugal, adding that in the dominions of the King and Queen of Castile, the Portuguese were treated with every respect and were as free and safe as at Lisbon. He further informed him that his sovereigns had given him letters of recommendation to all Princes, Sovereigns and commanders in the world, which he was ready to exhibit if desired; and that he was their Admiral of the Ocean Sea and Viceroy of the Indies, which then belonged to their Highnesses. The commission to this effect, signed and sealed by their hands he displayed to the Captain who remained at a distance. To these representations he subjoined others relating to the amity which subsisted between the King and Queen of Castile and the King of Portugal, and the orders which had been given by the former to treat with respect all Portuguese ships. If notwithstanding these considerations, he refused to release his crew, he stated that he should not be hindered from proceeding to Castile, as he had men enough left to navigate his vessel to Seville, and the Captain and his followers would be severely punished for the injury they had done him. The Captain and others in the boat replied that they knew nothing there of the King and Queen of Castile, or their commissions, nor cared for them, but would make the Spaniards learn what the Portuguese were, expecting to intimidate the Admiral. This gave him much anxiety, suspecting that some difference had arisen between the two kingdoms since his departure, yet he could not refrain from answering the Captain in such a manner as his conduct merited. The Captain stood up again in the boat and ordered him to proceed with the caravel to the harbour, add-

ing that all he had done was by order of the King, his master. The Admiral ordered all on board his vessel to bear witness to these transactions, and called out to the Captain and those with him, vowing that he would not leave the caravel till he had carried a hundred of the Portuguese to Castile, and depopulated the whole island. He then returned to his anchorage in the harbour, as the wind and weather did not admit of taking any other course.

Wednesday, Feb. 20th. The Admiral ordered the vessel to be set in order, and the casks to be filled from the sea for ballast, as the harbour was very bad, and he feared the rocky bottom would cut the cables, which in fact happened, and they put to sea toward the island of St. Miguel. There was no harbour in all the Azores, which was safe from the weather which then prevailed, and the only remedy was to stand off to sea.

Thursday, Feb. 21st. They left the island of Sta. Maria yesterday for that of St. Miguel, in search of a harbour against the bad weather, the wind being high with a heavy sea. They sailed till night without seeing any land, by reason of the clouds, and the obscurity which the wind and sea caused. The Admiral says, he was under some concern, having but three experienced sailors on board, the remainder being ignorant of seamanship. They kept lying-to with much labour and danger from the violence of the storm. In one respect Our Lord showed his mercy, the sea and wind came in one direction, had they been cross, the damage suffered would have been much greater. At sunrise, not seeing the island of St. Miguel, the Admiral resolved to return to Sta. Maria, and attempt the recovery

of his crew, with the boat and anchors which had been lost.

He expresses his astonishment at the furious storms among these islands, having sailed in the Indies all the winter without being forced to anchor by the weather, and not having for a single hour witnessed the sea unfit to navigate. He remarks that he met with stormy weather not only in these islands but also upon the passage outward till his arrival at the Canaries, but after that, had always a smooth sea and fine wind. He draws the conclusion that the theologians and learned philosophers had very justly placed the terrestrial paradise at the extremity of the East, the climate there being exceedingly mild. This is the region, he says, that he has discovered.

Friday, Feb. 22d. Yesterday they anchored at the island of Sta. Maria, in the place they had occupied before, and presently a man came clambering down the rocky shore opposite them, and called out for them not to leave the place. Shortly after, came the boat with five sailors, two ecclesiastics, and a notary. They demanded a security, which being given by the Admiral, they came on board, and it being night slept there, he showing them every respect in his power. In the morning they requested to see his commissions from the King and Queen of Castile, that they might be satisfied he had made the voyage by their order. The Admiral was sensible that they did this by way of a colour for their previous conduct, wishing to get free from the affair as well as they could, having failed in the attempt to seize him when they came out armed in the boat. It appeared now that the game would go against them, and

they were apprehensive he would carry his threat into effect. The Admiral in order to regain his men, thought fit to show them the King and Queen's letters, and his other commissions, he then treated them with such things as he had, and dismissed them contented ashore. The crew in the island were then released, and came on board in the boat; from them the Admiral learned that had the Portuguese succeeded in taking him, he would never have got free, for as the Captain stated, the King his master had given orders to that effect.

Saturday, Feb. 23d. Yesterday the weather began to grow favourable; they weighed anchor, and sailed round the island, searching for a good anchorage, to take in wood, and stone for ballast. Could not succeed till the hour of Complines.

Sunday, Feb. 24th. Came to anchor yesterday afternoon, but the sea being high, the boat was not able to land. At the first watch of the night, the wind began to blow from the W. and S.W. and the Admiral ordered the sails to be set; as it was dangerous in those islands to lie at anchor with a Southerly wind, and from the S.W. it quickly shifts to S. Seeing that it blew favourably for the passage to Castile, he resolved not to wait for the wood and ballast, and ordered to steer to the E., in which direction they sailed till sunrise, for the space of six hours and a half, seven miles an hour, going forty-five miles and a half. From sunrise till sunset they sailed six miles an hour, going sixty-six miles, in all twenty-eight leagues or  $111\frac{1}{2}$  miles.

Monday, Feb. 25th. After sunset last night they kept on their course E. at five miles an hour for the thirteen

hours of the night, sailing sixty-five miles or sixteen leagues and a quarter. From sunrise to sunset the next day, sixteen leagues and a half, the sea smooth, thanks to God. There came to the vessel a very large bird like an eagle.

Tuesday, Feb. 26th. Continued their course E., after sunset, the sea smooth, thanks to God. For the most of the night sailed eight miles an hour, going a hundred miles, or twenty-five leagues. After sunrise the wind grew light, with showers. Went about eight leagues to the E.N.E.

Wednesday, Feb. 27th. Last night and all this day they were driven out of their course by the contrary wind and heavy sea. The Admiral found himself by his reckoning, one hundred and twenty-five leagues from Cape St. Vincent, eighty from the island of Madeira, and one hundred and six from that of Sta. Maria. He was much afflicted at meeting with such a storm at the very door of home.

Thursday, Feb. 28th. Kept on in the same manner through the night, the wind varying from S. to S.E. and N.E. or N.N.E., the same through the day.

Friday, March 1st. In the night sailed E. by N., twelve leagues; in the day, twenty-three leagues and a half in the same direction.

Saturday, March 2d. At night kept on their course E. by N., sailing twenty-eight leagues; by day, twenty more.

Sunday, March 3d. After sunset continued their course E. A violent squall struck the vessel and split all the sails. They were in imminent danger, but God saw fit to deliver them. A lot was ordered for the choice of one to go on a pilgrimage in a shirt to St. Mary de la Cinta, at Huelva, and the lot fell again upon the Admiral. They all made a



vow to fast upon bread and water the first Saturday after their arrival. Sixty miles had been sailed before the sails were split, afterwards they drove under bare poles, with a furious tempest and cross sea. Signs of land were seen, and all judged themselves near Lisbon.

Monday, March 4th. In the night they laboured with a terrible storm, and were near meeting with destruction from the cross sea, the fury of the wind, which seemed to carry the caravel up to the skies, and there were violent showers and lightning from many parts; but it pleased our Lord to sustain them, and they drove before the storm till the first watch, when the sailors discovered land, and in order not to approach too near it before they could recognize it and see if they could find a harbour or place of shelter, they set the mainsail and stood off to sea, although with great danger; but there was no other course. God preserved them till day, but as the Admiral says, with infinite labour and apprehension on their part. When the day arrived they found the land to be the Rock of Cintra, near Lisbon, where the Admiral determined to enter, as he could do no better, the violence of the storm not allowing him to remain at Cascaes, near the mouth of the river. He states that the people of that village were all the morning offering up prayers for the safety of the vessel, and upon her arrival within the river ran in crowds to see the Spaniards, wondering at their escape. At three o'clock they arrived at Rastelo upon the Tagus, and were informed by the mariners of the place that such a stormy winter had never been known, twenty-five ships being lost in Flanders, and others had been detained four months without being able

to put to sea. The Admiral immediately wrote to the King of Portugal, who was nine leagues from that place, and informed him that the King and Queen of Castile had directed him to enter the ports of his Highness to purchase necessaries, and that he had come not from Guinea, but the Indies. He requested permission for the caravel to proceed to Lisbon, by reason that some scoundrels, imagining that the vessel contained much gold, might in that lonely place attempt some deed of violence.

Tuesday, March 5th. This day Bartolome Diaz de Lisboa,<sup>200</sup> the Patron of the King of Portugal's great ship which lay at anchor at Rastelo, a ship better equipped with cannons and small arms than any he had seen before — came in an armed boat to the caravel, and signified to the Admiral that he must go with them and give an account of himself to the stewards of the king, and the Captain of the abovementioned ship; he replied that he was Admiral of the King and Queen of Castile, and gave no accounts to any such persons, adding that he should not leave his vessel except by force of arms. The Patron then said he might send the master of the caravel, to which the Admiral answered that neither the master nor any other person should go unless compelled by violence, for he looked upon it to be the same as going himself, and it was the custom of the Castilian Admirals rather to die than deliver up either themselves or their men. The Patron then grew moderate and said he might do as he pleased, seeing he held such a resolution, but requested to see the letters of the King and Queen of Castile, if he had them there,

<sup>200</sup> The first man to round the Cape of Good Hope.

which the Admiral thought best to show him, when he returned to the ship, and related the circumstance to the Captain, whose name was Alvaro Dama. The Captain came on board the Admiral in great pomp with drums, trumpets and pipes, offering to serve him in any way he desired.

Wednesday, March 6th. The news of the Admiral's arrival from the Indies being known at Lisbon, there came a vast multitude from the city to visit him, and see the Indians; it was a matter of admiration to behold the crowds, and the wonder which they manifested, giving thanks to Our Lord, and declaring that for the great faith, and desire to serve God which the King and Queen of Castile displayed, the Almighty had granted them all this.

Thursday, March 7th. This day came an infinite multitude of people to the caravel, and among them many knights, and the royal stewards; all gave unbounded thanks to Our Lord for the great profit and increase of Christianity thus secured to the Sovereigns of Castile, which they attributed to the zeal of these Princes for the advancement of the Christian religion.

Friday, March 8th. This day the Admiral received by the hands of Dom Martin de Noronha, a letter from the King of Portugal, requesting him to pay him a visit, as the weather did not permit him to sail: the Admiral thought proper to comply, in order not to show mistrust, although he disliked it. He set out upon the journey and slept at Sacavem. The King ordered his stewards to furnish him and his crew with every thing they stood in need of, free of cost, and to perform every wish of the Admiral.

Saturday, March 9th. He left Sacavem to meet the King,

who was at Val do Paraiso, nine leagues from Lisbon; he did not reach the place till night on account of the rain. The King caused him to be received in the most honourable manner by the principal persons of his household, and conducted into his presence, where he treated him with the greatest respect, causing him to be seated. He then entered into conversation with him, and offered to perform every thing which could be for his service or that of the King and Queen of Castile. He expressed the highest pleasure at the success of the voyage, but remarked that he understood, according to the capitulation between him and those sovereigns, that this acquisition belonged to him. The Admiral replied that he had not seen the capitulation, nor was acquainted with any other circumstance respecting the matter, except that his orders had been not to go to Elmina, nor to any part of Guinea, and that this had been published in all the ports of Andalusia before the voyage. The King graciously answered that he was certain no vouchers for that fact were necessary. He ordered the Prior of Crato to entertain him, who was the person of the highest distinction in the place. This man treated him with every honour and attention.

Sunday, March 10th. After mass, the King repeated to him that he would furnish him with any thing he desired. Much conversation arose between them about the voyage; the King always desiring him to be seated and doing him much honour.<sup>201</sup>

Monday, March 11th. The Admiral took leave of the King, who entrusted him with a message to the King and

<sup>201</sup> See Note III.

Queen of Castile; and dismissed him with many marks of affection. He set out after dinner, attended by Dom Martin de Noronha, and all the knights, who by the King's direction escorted him some distance. Arriving at a monastery of St. Anthony near a place called Villa Franca, where the Queen resided, he went to pay his respects and kiss her hands, she having requested him not to depart without paying her a visit. She received him very honourably in presence of the Duke and Marquis. He left her at night, and went to sleep at Alhandra.

Tuesday, March 12th. On the point of setting out from Alhandra, there arrived a gentleman from the King, informing him that if he wished to go to Castile by land, he was ready to attend him for the purpose of providing animals and lodgings upon the road, and any other thing which might be necessary. When the Admiral took leave of him, he ordered him a mule, and another for the pilot, to whom as the Admiral learnt, he also presented twenty *espadims*.<sup>202</sup> He mentions this, as he says, that the King and Queen might know it. He arrived on board the caravel at night.

Wednesday, March 13th. At eight o'clock, weighed anchor and put to sea for Seville, with a Northwest wind and flood tide.

Thursday, March 14th. After sunset last night, steered South, and before morning found themselves off Cape St. Vincent, in Portugal. They then stood to the East for Saltes, and sailed with a light wind till night, when they were off Furon.

<sup>202</sup> Gold coin.

Friday, March 15th. After sunset continued their course with little wind, and at sunrise found themselves off Saltes. At noon they crossed the bar with the flood tide, and arrived within the port, from whence they had sailed on the third of August, the preceding year. And here, the Admiral says, this relation ends, but that he purposes to go to Barcelona by sea, being informed that their Highnesses are in that city, there to give them an account of his voyage, in which our Lord had directed and enlightened him. For although he believed without scruple that his high Majesty created all things good, that all is excellent but sin, and that nothing can be done without his permission, 'yet,' he observes, 'it has been most wonderfully manifested in the circumstances of this voyage, as may be seen by considering the many signal miracles performed throughout, as well as the fortune which has attended myself, who passed so long a time at the court of your Highnesses, and met with the opposition of so many of the principal persons of your household, who were all against me, and ridiculed my project. The which I hope in Our Lord will prove the greatest honour to Christianity ever accomplished with such ease.' These are the final words of the Admiral Don Christopher Columbus, in the relation of his first voyage and discovery of the Indies.

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III

RE-DISCOVERY OF NORTH AMERICA  
BY CABOT





## INTRODUCTION

**A**FTER the return of Columbus from his first voyage, an agreement between Spain and Portugal reserved the Atlantic as a field for Spanish discovery, of which Columbus held the monopoly rights; but in 1496 John Cabot, a naturalized Venetian of uncertain origin, prevailed upon Henry VII to support an English expedition to the area north of the Spanish zone. Of his voyage in the following year there survive only meagre and contradictory accounts, and the precise extent of his discoveries will remain uncertain unless further documents are found. The landfall was made on June 24th, 1497, apparently at the northern end of Cape Breton Island, where a map drawn in 1544 by his son, Sebastian, places the words "Land first seen." Another legend on the map, based upon information subsequently acquired by Sebastian, describes the country as barren, but abounding in fish and birds, white bears, and deer as large as horses, an obvious reference to moose or caribou.

Cabot probably returned at once, without further investigations, for on August 10th a royal decree was issued, granting £10 "to hym that founde the new isle": the

statement in one of the Italian accounts of his voyage, here translated, that he saw nine hundred miles of coast, might be interpreted to mean that he passed along the south shore of Newfoundland, but is more likely to be a mere mistake.

LETTER OF LORENZO PASQUALIGO TO HIS  
BROTHERS AT VENICE

*Dated at London, August 23d, 1497.*

OUR countryman, the Venetian who went with a ship from Bristol to search for new islands, has returned and says that seven hundred leagues from here he discovered mainland, the territory of the Great Khan. He coasted it for three hundred leagues and landed; he saw no human beings but has brought here to the King certain snares which had been set to catch game, and a needle for making nets; he also found some chopped trees, by which he judged there were inhabitants. He returned to his ship in doubt, and he has been three months on the voyage: this at least is certain. On his return he saw two islands to starboard but would not land, so as not to lose time, for he was short of provisions. This has greatly pleased the King. He says the tides there are slack and do not run as they do here.

The King has promised him for the spring ten ships fitted out as he desires, and at his request has conceded him all the prisoners, except those guilty of high treason, to man his fleet. The King has also given him money with which he may amuse himself till that time, and he is now in Bristol with his sons and his wife, who also is a Venetian. His name is Zuam Talbot, and he is called the Grand Admiral. Great honour is paid him; he dresses in silk,

and these English run after him like madmen, so that he can enlist as many of them as he pleases, and a number of our own rogues besides.

The discoverer of these places planted, on the lands he found, a large cross with one flag of England and one of St. Mark, on account of his being a Venetian, so that our banner has stood very far afield.

LETTER OF RAIMONDO DI SONCINO,  
MILANESE MINISTER TO ENGLAND,  
TO THE DUKE OF MILAN

*Dated at London, December 18th, 1497.*

PERHAPS even in the press of so much business Your Excellency will not be sorry to learn that His Majesty has gained part of Asia without a stroke of the sword. In this kingdom is a low-class Venetian called Master Zoanne Caboto, a man of considerable ability, most skilful in navigation, who saw that the Most Serene Kings, first the Portuguese and then the Spanish, had occupied unknown islands, and thought to make a similar acquisition for His Majesty. And having obtained the royal grants which gave him the profitable control of the lands found by him, the right of possession being reserved to the Crown, he committed himself to Fortune and departed in a little ship from the port of Bristol, in the western part of this kingdom, with eighteen persons. Passing Ireland, which lies more to the west, and then rising towards the north, he began to navigate to the oriental countries. Leaving the north on his right for some days, and wandering considerably, he came at last to *terra firma*, where he planted the royal banner, took possession for this sovereign, collected certain tokens and returned.

The said Master Zoanne, as he is a foreigner and poor, would not be believed if his partners, who are nearly all

Englishmen and from Bristol, did not testify to the truth of what he tells. This Master Zoanne has the representation of the world on a map, and also on a solid globe, which he has made, and he shows by them where he arrived, and going towards the Orient he has passed much of the Tanais country.<sup>1</sup> And they say that the land is fertile and temperate, and think that brazil wood and silks grow there, and they declare that the sea there is full of fish that can be taken not only with nets but with fishing-baskets, a stone being placed in the basket to sink it in the water, and this I have heard Master Zoanne tell. And the said Englishmen, his partners, say that they can bring so many fish that this kingdom will have no more business with Iceland, with which country it has a very great trade in the fish called stock-fish.

But Master Zoanne has his thoughts directed to a greater undertaking, for he thinks of going from the place which he has occupied farther along the coast towards the Orient until he is opposite an island he calls Cipango, situate in the equinoctial region, where he believes all the spices of the world grow, and there are also gems. And he says that he was once at Mecca, where from remote countries spices are carried by caravans, and that those carrying them, being asked where those spices grew, said they did not know, but that other caravans came to their homes with this merchandise from remote countries, and these too say that they receive them from other remote countries. And he argues that if the oriental people tell those of the south that these things are from places remote from

<sup>1</sup> Tartary.

them, and thus from hand to hand, it follows (assuming the rotundity of the earth) that the last fetch them from the north, towards the west. And he tells this in a way that makes me believe it, since to do so costs me no more than it does. And what is a greater thing, His Majesty here, who is wise and not prodigal, also places confidence in what he says, and since his return has provided well for him, as this Master Zoanne tells me. And in the spring, it is said, His Majesty will arm some ships and will give him all the criminals so that he may go to that country and plant a colony.

In this way he hopes to make London a greater place for spices than Alexandria. And the principals in the business are citizens of Bristol, great mariners, who, now that they know where to go, say that the voyage will not take more than fifteen days, nor do they ever have storms after leaving Ireland. I have also talked with a Burgundian, a companion of Master Zoanne, who affirms the same and who is willing to go, since the Admiral (as Master Zoanne is already styled) has given him an island, and he has given another to some barber of his, a Genoese from Castiglione, and they both consider themselves Counts while my Lord the Admiral thinks himself no less than a Prince. I believe too that some poor Italian friars will go on the voyage, all of whom have the promise of being bishops. And I, having become a friend of the Admiral's, if I wished to go, could have an archbishopric, but it has occurred to me that the benefices Your Excellency has reserved for me would be a surer thing, and I beg that if any become vacant during my absence you will give me

possession of them, taking care that they are not usurped in the mean time by others, whose presence enables them to be more urgent in their claims than I, who am reduced in this country to eat ten or twelve courses at every meal and stay three hours at table each time, twice a day, for the love of Your Excellency. To whom I humbly commend myself.

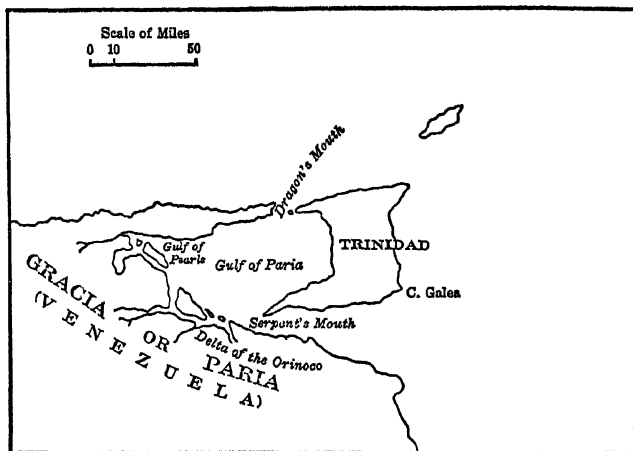
Your Excellency's most humble servant,  
Raimundus.



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IV  
DISCOVERY OF SOUTH AMERICA  
BY COLUMBUS

■



THE THIRD VOYAGE OF COLUMBUS

## INTRODUCTION

ON his second voyage, as on the first, Columbus did not touch any part of the American mainland but remained in the West Indies. The southern continent was first sighted on his third expedition, which took place a year after Cabot's crossing of the North Atlantic. The following account of the discovery is taken from a letter sent by Columbus to the King and Queen of Spain after his arrival in Española. The beginning and end of the dispatch are not translated since they are not concerned with the writer's explorations but with his political troubles.

It will be noticed that Columbus remained in doubt whether the land he had discovered was truly another continent. The question was virtually decided as the result of several Spanish expeditions, but Amerigo Vespucci removed all hesitation by his exploration of the coast as far as the Argentine, in 1501-1502: in 1507 the name *America* was first proposed, in an Alsatian publication of his letters.

## LETTER OF COLUMBUS

I STARTED in the name of the most holy Trinity from the town of San Lucar, on Wednesday, the 30th of May,<sup>1</sup> much fatigued after my last voyage; for I had left these Indies hoping to find rest in Spain, only to have my pains redoubled. I sailed to the island of Madeira by an unusual route, to avoid any trouble that might arise with a French fleet which was watching for me at Cape St. Vincent, and thence proceeded to the Canary Islands. I left there with one ship and two caravels, sending the other ships to the island of Española by the direct course to the Indies, while I myself sailed south, designing to reach the equator and then keep west, until the island of Española lay north of me. I came to the Cape Verd Islands (which are badly named, for no green thing can be seen on them, and their people were all so sick that I dared not stay in them), and sailed on towards the S.W. for four hundred and eighty miles, which make one hundred and twenty leagues; here the pole-star stood in the fifth degree at nightfall. Then the wind failed, and I came into such great heat that I thought I should have my ships and crew burnt up, and suddenly everything became so disordered that no person dared go below deck to see to the water-butt and provisions. This heat continued for eight days; the first day was fine, on the other seven it rained and was cloudy, yet we met with no relief, so that

I believe we could not have escaped at all if the sun had shone as on the first day.

I remembered that whenever, on my voyages to the Indies, I had got a hundred leagues west of the Azores Islands, I found a change of temperature; and north and south, this is always the case. I decided that, if our Lord pleased to give me a wind and good weather so that I could proceed elsewhere, I should cease going south, yet not turn back, but sail W. as far as that longitude, where I hoped to find the temperature similar to what I met there when I was sailing in the latitude of the Canaries: in which case I could then go farther south. It pleased our Lord at the end of these eight days to give me a fair east wind and I proceeded to the W. But I did not dare to turn down to the S., because I found a very great change in the sky and the stars but none in the temperature; for this cause I resolved to continue straight on to the W., in the parallel of Sierra Leone, and not change course until I came where I expected to find the land: there I would caulk the ships, renew our supply of provisions if possible, and fill up with water.

We made the land after seventeen days (throughout which our Lord gave me a favourable wind), at noon on Tuesday, the 31st of July. I had expected to discover it on the previous Monday and held on the afore-said course until that day; then, as the sun was gaining strength and my water supply began to fail, I decided to go to the islands of the Caribals<sup>2</sup> and altered course accordingly, whereupon the Majesty on high continued the mercy he

<sup>2</sup> Caribs or Cannibals of the northern West Indies.

has always shown me, for a sailor climbed to the main-top and saw a range of three mountains in the West. We said the *Salve Regina* and other prayers, and all gave many thanks to our Lord, and then I left our northern course and turned towards the land: I reached it at the hour of Complines,<sup>3</sup> coming to a cape which I called *Galea*,<sup>4</sup> while I had named the island *Trinidad*.<sup>5</sup> Here I discovered a harbour which would have been excellent if there had been an anchorage, and there were houses and people, and very pretty country, as green and beautiful as the gardens of Valencia in March. I was distressed at being unable to enter the harbour, but after running along the coast westward for five leagues I discovered another with a very good bottom, and anchored. The next day I made sail again in the same direction, in search of a harbour where I could caulk the ships, take in water and add to our corn and provisions, our sole cargo. Taking in a pipe of water, I proceeded onwards till I reached the extremity of this coast, where I found a good anchorage sheltered from the east wind, so I gave orders to have the anchors dropped, the water-cask caulked, and a stock of water and wood laid in, and for the crews to go ashore and refresh themselves after the hardships they had so long endured.

I called the promontory *Punta del Arenal*.<sup>6</sup> The ground there was covered with the prints of some kind of animal with hoofs like a goat's; it seemed as though they must

<sup>3</sup> 9 P.M.

<sup>4</sup> *I.e.*, Helmet; the S.E. extremity of the island of Trinidad, now called Cape Galeota.

<sup>5</sup> Inspired by the *trinity* of mountain peaks, still known as Mt. Trinity.

<sup>6</sup> *I.e.*, Sandy Point: This was the S.W. corner of Trinidad.

be plentiful, yet we saw none, except a dead one.<sup>7</sup> On the following day a large canoe arrived from the E.; it held twenty-four men, all young and well supplied with arms—bows and arrows, and wooden shields. They were all young, as I said, and well built, not black but lighter than the other natives I had seen in the Indies; they moved most gracefully and had beautiful bodies. They wore long, straight hair, cut in the Spanish style, and bound their heads with a strip of cotton woven in coloured patterns, which I might have mistaken for Moorish gauze. They wore another such strip around the waist, covering themselves therewith instead of with breeches. They called to us from the canoe at a great distance but neither I nor any other man could understand them, so I had signs made to tell them to come closer. More than two hours were so spent, for whenever they came a trifle nearer they retired again at once. I had basins and other shiny things displayed to entice them to approach, and after a long time they drew in nearer than ever before; as I greatly desired to have speech with them but had nothing more I could show them that seemed likely to fetch them to me, I had a drum brought up and played on the quarter-deck and ordered some young men to dance. I expected them to enjoy the sight of the amusements, but no sooner did they perceive the drumming and dancing than they all left their oars, seized their bows and strung them, slipped their shields on their arms and began to shoot arrows at us. I

<sup>7</sup> A species of deer still exists on the island; but Ferdinand Columbus says that the bones discovered were those of a monkey, the head being without horns.

immediately stopped the music and dancing and had some cross-bows discharged, whereupon they left me and went on to one of the caravels, putting themselves at once under its poop. Its pilot spoke to them, giving a coat and a cap to the man who seemed to be their chief, and made an agreement that he should go and talk on the beach, at which they went there in their canoe to await him. But he would not go without my permission, and when they saw him coming in a boat to my ship, they got back into their canoe and went off, and I never saw any more of them, or of the other inhabitants of this island.

When I reached this Point Arenal, it turned out that a strait, two leagues wide from W. to E., was formed there between the island of Trinidad and the land of *Gracia*,<sup>8</sup> and we had to enter this strait to continue our way to the N. It was crossed by several currents, which roared very loud. I thought there must be a reef of rocks and shoals, which would not allow me to pass through; and behind this first line lay another and another, all making a loud roaring like the noise of waves breaking and beating against rocks. I anchored there at Point Arenal, outside this strait, and found the water was running from E. to W. as furiously as the Guadalquivir at ebb-tide, but day and night continuously, so that I believed I could not go back, because of the current, nor go forward, because of the shoals. Moreover, I was on deck late at night and heard a very terrible roaring coming towards the ship from the south, so I looked out, and saw that the sea was rolling

<sup>8</sup> In Venezuela; Columbus had now discovered the mainland of South America.



from W. to E. in a wave like a mountain, as high as the ship, which was gradually approaching me; and on top of that came the stream of a current which roared as it moved onward with as tremendous and furious an uproar as was caused by those other currents which sounded to me, as I have said, like waves beating against rocks. To this day I can feel in my body the fear lest my ship should founder when that wave came upon us, but it passed us safely and went on to the strait, where it continued for a long time. On the following day I sent the boats in to take soundings, and found there were six or seven fathoms of water at the shallowest part of the strait and that the currents constantly ran contrary to one another, some inwards and some outwards. It pleased our Lord to give me a fair wind, so I passed through the strait, whereupon I entered still water; I had some water drawn up from the sea and found to my surprise that it was *fresh*.

I sailed on to the N. as far as a very high range of mountains, some twenty-six leagues from Punta del Arenal. Here there were two very high headlands, one on the E., forming part of this same island of Trinidad, and one on the W. that belongs to what I have called the land of Gracia; these form a strait still narrower than the one at Punta del Arenal, with similar currents and the same violent roaring of the water (which here likewise is fresh). Hitherto I had had no speech with the people of these regions, though I longed for it; I therefore sailed along the coast of this land<sup>9</sup> to the W. The sea-water proved continually fresher and more wholesome. After consider-

<sup>9</sup> Venezuela.

able distance I came to a place where the soil looked cultivated, so I anchored and sent the boats ashore; finding that the people had left there not long before, and that the whole mountain was covered with monkeys, they returned to the ships. While this coastline was formed by a range of mountains, the country farther W. seemed more level and for that reason more likely to be inhabited; hence I got up the anchors and ran along the coast to the end of the range. I anchored there at a river, when a large number of people appeared. They told me they called this region Paria, and that it was more densely peopled farther westward: I took four of them, and then sailed off to the W.<sup>10</sup> On the far side of a headland which I named *Punta del Aguja*,<sup>11</sup> eight leagues to the W., I found some of the finest country of the world, and it was well populated. I reached it at the hour of Terce<sup>12</sup> one morning, but the sight of its luxuriance and beauty decided me to anchor and meet its inhabitants, some of whom presently came to the ship in canoes, asking me, on behalf of their king, to go ashore; and seeing that I paid no attention, a countless number came out to the ship by canoe. Many of them wore pieces of gold on the breast, while some had strings of pearls around their arms, facts that pleased me greatly; I took much care to ascertain where they found such things, and they replied that it was in this district and N. of that land.

I should have liked to stay here, but the provisions (corn, wine and meat), which I was carrying for the colo-

<sup>10</sup> Into the Gulf of Paria.

<sup>12</sup> The ecclesiastical "third hour," 9 A.M.

<sup>11</sup> I.e., Needle Point.

nists, were going to waste, after bringing them there with so much trouble, and all my care was to press on and come to where I could put them in safety, without stopping for anything; only I wished to obtain some pearls, and therefore sent the boats ashore. The inhabitants are very numerous, all of very handsome appearance, of the same colour as those we had seen before, and very polite; our people on shore found them exceedingly well-inclined and met with a most courteous reception. I was told that no sooner had the boats come to land than two important personages (whom they took to be father and son) arrived with the entire population and led them to an enormous house, which was not round like a tent as the rest were, but built with two sloping roofs; it contained many seats, upon which they placed our men, and others where they themselves sat. They had bread fetched, and many kinds of fruit, and many kinds of wine, both white and red; this was not made from grapes, but one variety apparently from one sort of fruit and one from another.<sup>18</sup> Some must be produced from maize, a plant that forms an ear like wheat, which I have introduced into Castile (where it has already become plentiful); they appear to regard the best kind of this as a great delicacy and prize it highly. The men all stayed together at one end of the house and the women at another. Both parties were much distressed at failing to understand one another, the others because they could not inquire about our country and our men because they wanted information about the Indians.

<sup>18</sup> Intoxicating drinks were prepared from Indian corn, cassava, and various fruits and roots.

After having this meal in the house of the older chief, the young one brought our men to his house and gave them another such meal; then they got into the boats and returned to the ship, at which I got up the anchors. For I had need of haste, both to save the stores which were getting spoilt after all the trouble I had had with them, and to cure myself from the effects of constant watching: on the voyage in which I set out to discover the continent I passed the thirty-three days until I saw land without proper sleep, yet my eyes did not trouble me on that occasion so much as now, when they broke out into bleeding and became most painful.

These Indians, as I said, are all admirably built, tall and graceful in their movements, and have long, straight hair; they tie around their heads the fine patterned cloths I spoke of, which look from a distance like silk or gauze; they wear, too, another wider strip as a belt which both men and women use instead of breeches to cover themselves. In colour this race is paler than the others I have seen in the Indies. After the fashion of these lands everyone wears something on the breast and round the arms, often a piece of base gold hung on the breast. The canoes are larger than elsewhere, better made and lighter, and each has a room in the centre as a cabin, for the use, as I saw, of the chiefs and their wives. I called the place *Jardines*,<sup>14</sup> that being a suitable name. I made many inquiries to discover where they obtained their gold, and everyone indicated a country on their western borders, not far off but very mountainous. Moreover they all told

<sup>14</sup> *I.e.*, Gardens.

me not to go thither, because men got eaten there; at the time I understood them to mean that the inhabitants were cannibals, as elsewhere, but I have since thought that they might have been alluding to animals. I asked them also where they obtained their pearls, and they pointed to the W. again and to the N., behind the district where they lived. I did not investigate the matter, because of the provisions and my bad eyes, and because a ship the size of mine is not intended for such work.

The time was so short that it all passed merely in asking questions, and, as I said, as soon as the men returned to their ships (at the hour of Vespers), I got up the anchors and stood to the W.; I sailed on, next day, until I found that we had only three fathoms depth. I believed that this country was only an island and that I could sail round it to the N.: to this end I sent a light caravel ahead to see whether there was a passage or whether the land was continuous. It went on as far as a very large gulf, into which four lesser gulfs seemed to open, and from one of these there issued a huge river; everywhere they found five fathoms depth of quite fresh water—it was the freshest I ever tasted, because there was such a quantity of it. I was much disappointed at the discovery that I could not pass through to the N., nor yet to the S. or W., being landlocked on each side; accordingly I raised the anchors and turned back to get to the N. by means of the strait I have described above. I was unable to return past the village where I had stayed, since the currents carried me out of my previous course. I always found the water fresh and clear at every point and it carried me eastwards very

swiftly towards the two straits that I have already described. Hence I conjectured that these currents and the hills of water that ran in or out of the straits with such a tremendous roaring, were due to a struggle between the fresh and the salt water; the fresh hindered the entrance of the salt, which again impeded the other's escape. I also conjectured that the spot now occupied by these two straits must at some time become dry land, joining the island of Trinidad to the land of Gracia (as your Highnesses can perceive from the sketch which I am sending you together with this letter).<sup>15</sup> I passed through the northern of these straits, where I found the water continued fresh; while the wind was carrying us through, across one of the "hills," I found that the currents on its inner side were fresh although those on the outer side were salt.

When, in sailing from Spain to the Indies, I had passed a hundred leagues W. of the Azores, I found a considerable change suddenly took place in the sky, the stars, the temperature of the air, and the water of the sea; and I took great care to observe the matter with all accuracy. I noticed also, at this distance of a hundred leagues from the said islands (whether on the N. or on the S. side), that the compass-needle quickly left its previous N.E. position and swung a full quarter N.W. Another thing happened on arrival at this line, just as though someone had transported a coastline there, for I found the entire sea full of a kind of weed resembling pine-branches but heavily laden with fruit like that of the lentisk. The weeds are so thick that on my first voyage I mistook them for a shoal

<sup>15</sup> The Orinoco is silting up the straits very rapidly.

and expected the ships to run aground, yet until I reached this line I had not met a single branch. I noticed too when I came there that the sea was very smooth and even, so that a strong wind did not make the ships unsteady. Again, I found that on the westward side of the line the temperature was very mild and did not vary, either in winter or in summer. At this spot I found that the pole-star described a circle, five degrees in diameter; further, the star reaches its lowest point when the Guards<sup>16</sup> stand at its right, it rises continually till it comes on the left (where it is at five degrees) and then declines as it goes round again to the right.

On my present voyage I came from Spain to Madeira, thence to the Canaries and on to the Cape Verde Islands, from which I set off to sail S. across the equator (as I have already described). When I reached the parallel of Sierra Leone, in Guinea, I felt such intense heat and such power in the sun's rays, that I thought we should be burnt up, and I continued in the same state of exhaustion in spite of rain and a cloudy sky, until our Lord granted me a fair wind which allowed me to sail towards the W. and reach the line at which I declared the temperature would change. Immediately upon reaching this line I found indeed that the temperature turned very mild, and it became more so the farther I advanced: but with the stars the event proved contrary to my expectation.

I observed here that at nightfall the pole-star stood to me at a height of five degrees, while the Guards were

<sup>16</sup> The two brightest stars at the other end of the same constellation, *Ursa Minor*.

up above it; then at midnight the star had climbed to ten degrees, and at dawn the Guards were fifteen degrees below it. The sea I found to be calm as before, but in the matter of the weed the case was different. I felt great astonishment at the behaviour of the pole-star, and therefore took great pains in taking observations with the quadrant night after night, and I always found the lead and line fell at the same point. I hold this to be something novel: it may be considered too that the difference in temperature is remarkable for such a short distance.

I have always read that the world, both land and water, is round; the arguments and experiments recorded by Ptolemy and every other writer on the subject supply proofs of the matter, in the form of lunar eclipses and other observations made from east to west in addition to the elevation of the pole from north to south. But now I have seen all this irregularity which I have described, and it has forced me to hold the opinion that the world is not round, as they figure it, but has the shape of a pear—round, except for a projecting stalk; like a round ball upon one part of which rises something like a woman's nipple. The stalk part must be the highest and nearest to the sky, and be placed below the equator in this ocean, at the end of the east; by the end of the east I mean where the continent and islands all come to an end. In support of my theory I quote all the facts already mentioned about the line running N. and S. at a hundred leagues W. of the Azores, how in sailing westward from there the ships go on rising gently towards the sky, how one then enjoys a milder temperature, how this mildness causes the compass-



needle to shift a point and how it moves farther to the N.W. as one moves onward and upward; the elevation causes the variations in the circle described by the pole-star and its Guards, which rose higher the closer I came to the equator, the greater being the difference in the position of these stars and in their orbits. Ptolemy and the other learned men who have written about the world believed it to be spherical, thinking this hemisphere was rounded like that in which they lived and which is centred upon the island of Arin (situated below the equator between the Arabian and the Persian Gulfs);<sup>17</sup> the circle passes westward over Cape St. Vincent in Portugal and eastward over Cangara<sup>18</sup> and the Seras.<sup>19</sup> I find no reason to doubt that this hemisphere is round, as they say, but I declare that the other resembles the half of a perfectly rounded pear with a tall stalk, as I have described, like a woman's nipple on a round ball. Ptolemy and the other writers took no account of this half of the world because it was quite unknown, basing their views purely on the hemisphere they inhabited, and this, as I said, is perfectly rounded.

Now that your Highnesses have commanded navigators to seek and discover the second hemisphere, the facts can be proved most clearly. Thus, on this voyage I found the people black and the land very much burnt when I was twenty degrees N. of the equator, off Hargin<sup>20</sup> and those

<sup>17</sup> The city of Ujjain, in the present State of Gwalior; here the Indian geographers placed their first meridian.

<sup>18</sup> Japan.

<sup>19</sup> Chinese.

<sup>20</sup> Arguin in French West Africa.

parts; then I came to the Cape Verd Islands, where the people are much blacker, and the further S. one goes, the more extreme is the blackness, so that the people are utterly black at Sierra Leone, in which latitude I found the pole-star at the height of five degrees at nightfall; and in sailing W. from there I experienced the utmost possible heat. When I passed the line I spoke of, I found the temperature became modified, and it continued to do so. Accordingly when I reached the island of Trinidad, where the north star again rose five degrees at nightfall, I found a very mild climate prevailing there and in the land of Gracia. The earth and trees were very green, as lovely as the gardens of Valencia in April: the people were very graceful, paler than the others I had seen in the Indies, with very long, straight hair; it is a more shrewd and intelligent race, and not cowardly. The sun was then in the sign of Virgo, above our heads and theirs, hence all this must result from the exceedingly mild temperature prevalent in that country in consequence of its being the highest in the world and the closest, as I calculate, to the air. For these reasons I affirm that the world is not spherical but has the irregularity which I have stated, and that occurs in this hemisphere, where the Indies touch the Ocean, the extremity of the hemisphere stretching below the equator. There remains a strong argument in favour of this being the case, in that the sun was in the first point of the east when our Lord made it, and the first light would be in that portion of the east where the elevation of this world is the greatest. Although it was Aristotle's opinion that the antarctic pole, or the land below it, is the

highest part of the world and the closest to the sky, other learned men oppose him, saying that it lies under the arctic pole; it appears therefore that they realize that some part of this world must be more eminent and closer to the sky than the rest; only it did not occur to them that it might be below the equator, in the manner I have described — which is no wonder, for there existed no certain information upon that hemisphere but merely rash suppositions, since no one had gone there or sent to look for it, until your Highnesses commanded me to explore and discover both sea and land.

I found that the two straits, which, as I said, are opposite each other in a line from N. to S., have a distance of twenty-six leagues between them; there can be no error in the figure because it was reckoned by quadrant. From these two straits westward to the gulf already mentioned (which I called the Gulf of Pearls) is a distance of sixty-eight leagues, according to our usual sea measurement of four miles to the league. From this gulf the water runs constantly eastwards with great force, giving rise to that contest with the salt water in the two straits. In the southern strait, which I called the Serpent's Mouth, I found the north star practically five degrees high at night-fall, but in the northern, which I called the Dragon's Mouth, practically seven. I also found that the said Gulf of Pearls lies W. of the . . .<sup>21</sup> of Ptolemy nearly three thousand nine hundred miles, or nearly seventy equinoctial degrees, each of fifty-six and two-thirds miles.

<sup>21</sup> Omission; presumably not a reference to Ptolemy's first meridian, which he intended to pass through the most westerly of the Canaries, for the distance would then be overstated by about 200 miles.

The Holy Scripture bears witness that our Lord made the Earthly Paradise and planted in it the Tree of Life, from which proceeds a fountain that forms the four chief rivers of this world: Ganges<sup>22</sup> in India, Tigris and Euphrates in . . . ,<sup>23</sup> which divide the mountains and form Mesopotamia and continue into Persia, and the Nile, which rises in Ethiopia and enters the sea at Alexandria.

I do not find, nor ever have found, any work of the Latins or of the Greeks that definitely declares the situation in this world of the Earthly Paradise; neither have I seen it marked upon any map, except as a subject of dispute. Some put it at the sources of the Nile in Ethiopia; but others have passed through all this country without finding such a correspondence as regards the temperature or the height toward the sky as might indicate that it had been there, nor could they see that the waters of the Flood had reached there to overwhelm it. Some pagans have tried to prove by argument that it was in the Fortunate Isles, the modern Canaries. St. Isidore, Bede, Strabo,<sup>24</sup> the Master of the *Scholastic History*,<sup>25</sup> St. Ambrose, Scotus and all the sound theologians agree that this Earthly Paradise is in the East, etc.

I have given my views on this hemisphere and its shape, and I believe that if I passed below the equator as far as the highest point, I should find a much milder temperature and a difference in the stars and the water; not that

<sup>22</sup> The Pison and Gihon of *Genesis* are here identified with Ganges and Nile.

<sup>23</sup> Name of country omitted.

<sup>24</sup> Walafrid Strabo, who died in 849.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Comestor, twelfth century.

I think the highest part is navigable or that there is water there, or that it is possible to ascend to it, for I believe that no one can reach the Earthly Paradise except God wills. But I think that this land which your Highnesses have now sent me to discover is very large, and that there are many others in the south of which no one ever had knowledge.

I do not believe that the Earthly Paradise is in the form of a craggy mountain, as the descriptions picture it to us, but that it is on the summit of what I called by analogy the stalk of the pear, and is approached by a gradual ascent, beginning a long distance off; though, as I say, I do not believe that anyone will be able to reach the summit. I think that the water I discovered may issue from the Paradise, though that is far away; it is brought to a stop at the place to which I came, and therefore forms this lake. The above are considerable indications of the Earthly Paradise; the site agrees with the opinion of those saints and wise theologians, while the signs are in perfect agreement, for I never read or heard of such a quantity of fresh water being inside or next to salt water, and the exceptional mildness of the temperature is an additional argument. If the water does not issue from the Paradise, it appears an even greater wonder, for I do not believe that any known river in the world has such size and depth.

On the day after I left the Dragon's Mouth (which name I gave to the more northerly of the two straits), this being the day of Our Lady of August,<sup>26</sup> I found that the sea ran so hard to the W. that I made sixty-five

<sup>26</sup> August 15th.

leagues, each of four miles, between the hour of mass, when I commenced this journey, and the hour of Compline; <sup>27</sup> and the wind was not excessive but very gentle. This too is an argument for the view that in travelling southward we go upwards, but descend in travelling northward, as on the present occasion.

I consider it fully proved that the waters of the sea run their course from E. to W., like the heavens, and that they travel faster when they pass through this district. Thus they have eaten away a great part of the land, forming thereby this multitude of islands, which themselves offer further testimony: for on the one hand, they are all widest from E. to W., varying slightly more or less if they lie N.W. or S.E., whereas in the contrary direction, N. to S. or N.E. to S.W., they are all narrow; and on the other hand there grow precious things in all of them, because of the mild temperature that proceeds to them from the sky, as a result of their being the highest part of the world. In some places, it is true, the water apparently does not take the same course, but that only happens in certain particular spots, where some land stands in the way and makes the water appear to be moving in different directions.

Pliny writes that sea and land together form a sphere, holding that the ocean contains the greater part of the waters and lies nearer the sky, with the earth underneath holding it up, as a thick-skinned nut is embraced by its covering.<sup>28</sup> The Master of the *Scholastic History* says,

<sup>27</sup> 9 A.M.—9 P.M., assuming “mass” to be celebrated after Terce.

<sup>28</sup> *Como el amago de la nuez con una tela gorda que va abrazado en*

speaking of *Genesis*, that the waters are very scanty; although they covered the whole earth when they were created, they were then vaporous like a mist, and after they became condensed and united they occupied a very small space; Nicholas of Lyra agrees with this view. Aristotle says that this world is small and the water very scanty, so that one can easily pass from Spain to the Indies. Averrhoes agrees, and Cardinal Pierre d'Ailly<sup>29</sup> quotes him, accepting this statement and Seneca's, on the ground that Aristotle might have learnt many of the world's secrets by means of Alexander the Great, Seneca by means of Caesar Nero, and Pliny by the Romans, for all these used up money and men, persistently inquiring into the secrets of the world and bringing them to popular knowledge. The said cardinal considers these authors most authoritative, above Ptolemy or the other Greeks and Arabs. In confirmation of the statement that the amount of water is scanty and that it covers only a small portion of the world, which he makes upon the authority of Ptolemy and his followers, he brings in the authority of Esdras, where he says in his third book that, of the world's seven parts, six are revealed and the remaining one is covered with water.<sup>30</sup> The authoritative position of Esdras

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*ello*. I am uncertain how to translate this phrase. *Amago* (as Sr. Martinez de Alva, of the Mexican Legation at London, has kindly informed me) may mean either the bitter-tasting cover of a walnut when still green, or the cuticle of a ripe walnut.

<sup>29</sup> Columbus possessed a copy of this fifteenth-century treatise and apparently drew from it most of his information about older authorities.

<sup>30</sup> II. Esdras, vi. 42-47. The book appears to be a Christian work of the first century.

is allowed by the saints, who ascribe canonicity to his third and fourth books; thus St. Augustine, and St. Ambrose in his *Hexameron*, quoting, "Here my son, Jesus, shall come, and my son, Christ, shall die."<sup>31</sup> They say that Esdras was a prophet, like Zacharias, the father of St. John and the . . .<sup>32</sup> Simeon; these are quoted as authoritative by Francis Mayron.<sup>33</sup> As regards the extent of dry land, it has been found by experience that there exists far more than is commonly believed, which is not surprising, for one learns more by travelling farther.

I return to my subject of the land of Gracia and the river and lake which exist therein; the last is so large that it may more justly be called a sea than a lake, for a lake is a small piece of water, and a large example is called a sea, as in the case of the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. I hold that if this river does not issue from the Earthly Paradise, it must come from an immense country that lies to the S., of which there has been no knowledge until now: but I am well assured in my own mind that there, where I have declared, lies the Earthly Paradise, and I rest my opinion upon the arguments and authorities which I have given above.

<sup>31</sup> II. Esdras, vii. 28. "For my son Jesus shall be revealed with those that be with him, and they that remain shall rejoice within four hundred years. After these years shall my son Christ die, and all men that have life."

<sup>32</sup> The copyist found this word illegible and wrote *brazo*, probably by mistake for *beato*, "blessed."

<sup>33</sup> A French Scotist, died 1327.











